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EASTERN LIGHTS

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SOME PHASES OF LIFE, THOUGHT AND MYSTICISM IN INDIA

BY

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TO

THE

REVERED MEMORY

OF

SIR ASHUTOSH MUKHERJEE, Kt., C.S.I.

IN

ESTEEM AND VENERATION

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PREFACE

His Excellency Senator Giovanni Gentile, the President of the Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, sent me an invitation in November, 1933, to deliver lectures on Indian Philosophy and Modern Hinduism. Invitations also reached me in Rome from Dr. Franz Thierfelder, Honorary Secretary, Deutsche Akademie, Munich (Germany) and from Prof. Sylvain Lévi to deliver lectures in the Universities of Hamburg, Marburg, Tübingen and Munich in Germany and in the University of Sorbonne, Paris.

The book comprises these lectures. They were so planned that they could exhibit the fundamental ideals of Indian life and culture. Indian spirituality, Indian thought and Indian life are presented herein in quintessence. The Indian mind has stuck to certain fundamental convictions which the influence of age has not been able to affect. India has come in contact with diverse forces of civilization; but, wonderfully enough, the expression of Indian life has been almost fundamentally the same throughout the long course of

history. India develops concepts of thought and ideals of life which till this day are shaping the life of the nation.

Prof. Henri Bergson wrongly interprets the dynamical expression of Indian life as due to her contact with Western civilization. (The Two Sources of Religion and Morality, p. 193). The development of life always follows the inner necessity. The Indian believes in the cycles of civilization and the influence of time-spirit in them. The necessity of one age has not been the necessity of the other, and it is evident from Indian literatures that different ideas were dominant in the different periods of its life and expression. Indian spirituality shows infinite phases of life in its richness and fullness, and in them all the chords of life have their full satisfaction. The over-emphasis upon some of the concepts has produced an erroneous idea that Indian mind is not alive to dynamical verities. Prof. Bergson thinks that activistic mysticism—and to him 'mysticism is action'—is liberated in India through the influence of Christianity. An acquaintance with Indian thought and life will demonstrate its falsity. Whatever might have been the ideals of the great mystic teachers in India, they were intensely active in life. And this is only natural. For

the search into our being releases all the forces of our psychic make-up. Love and charity may be great creative forces, but their finest forms are released in lucent wisdom. These forces may lack the human elements but not the divine fervour and intensity. Wisdom is the soul of life. "Wisdom is the lamp of love, and love is the oil of the lamp. Love, sinking deeper, grows wiser; and wisdom that springs up aloft comes ever the nearer to love." (Wisdom and Destiny by Maeterlinck, p. 31).

The book has three main divisions. The first part gives the spiritual ideas of the Upanisads, the Geetā, the Bhāgavata Purāna and the Tantras. The wide spiritual horizon of a luminous expanse in the Upanisads is in living contrast to the dynamism of life in the Geetā, to the softer expression of harmony and beauty in the Bhāgavata Purāna and to the psychic currents of the soul in the Tantras. All of them give fine spiritual inspiration; a careful reading of them will indicate the delicate differences in the formative spirit in the different stages of self-expression.

Philosophical ideas and concepts are next presented, and it will be seen how throughout the constructive moulding of thought the finest spiritual realizations are logically re-affirmed. Spirituality is

really what fills up the gap between life and thought. This gap is not only to be removed from internal life but from external life as well in the conception of society as an integral existence.

Modern Hinduism marks the definite move of a catholic understanding of the forces of culture and spirituality imported from without and of a conscious assimilation of them with the living ideas of Hinduism. No modern teacher in Hinduism has completely broken away from the past but has instilled inspiration into Hindu life by assimilating forces from without. This impact has rather helped to revive some of the lost forces of life.

Dr. Jung has truly said, "It is the East that has taught another wide, more profound and a higher understanding, that is, understanding through life."—(The Secret of Golden Flower). When one is imbued and inspired with this kind of understanding, one can better appreciate the dignity, the power, the potentiality of the ancient wisdom of the Indians. India apparently is fast changing but the heart of Aryavartta is still after the discovery of the encompassing life which removes conflicts in its supreme puissance and plenitude. This re-orientation in spirit makes life beat in divine harmony, secures it in divine strength, and moves it

in divine elasticity, delight and freshness and fills it with divine Peace and Omniscient Silence.

The Arya Publishing House volunteered their services in the publication of this book, and I am thankful to them for their untiring devotion to make the book as much decent as is possible under conditions prevalent here.

M. S.

I

PHILOSOPHIC AND MYSTICAL INSPIRATION OF THE UPANISADS.

The Upanisads represent a body of spiritual realizations based upon individual experience. They form the spiritual heritage of the ancient seers of India. They attract by their sublime simplicity and rich suggestiveness. They speak in the language of the soul, and not in the language of the intellect. Hence they attract but they do not always appeal, for their teachings do not go deeply into the soul, unless the soul has responsive yearning, or is ripe for them.

The quest of the Upanisads is Truth and this quest is more through life than through intellect. Certainly the Upanisads exhibit nowhere traces of intellectualism, though the Truth it offers can be understood in the height of intellectual intuition. Truth and life are never dissociated, for life in its essence is Truth.

Life has its infinite urges and not one of them may reflect Truth completely, but it cannot be denied that life is conceived in Truth. Life is supported in Truth. The seeking of Life is Truth, for life is Truth. If there is restlessness in life, it is because life has deviated from Truth and is among the shadows.

"What should I do with things which do not give me immortality?"—so says Maitreyi. And the want of Truth is a great gap in nature which cannot be filled by anything else. Even the highest functions and the best possibilities are nothing in comparison to this; they may offer brighter prospects, finer movements of life, wider penetrations, radiant feeling, a cosmic vision; but they may still be only shadows, and luminous shadows.

The idea of soul growing into subtle perfections has been rejected by the Upanisads, since it does not represent the full Truth. The psychic perfections, however great as attainments, are nothing before Truth. In the budding of the soul delicate tendencies manifest themselves which cover Truth in the inmost recesses of our being, but they are not to be considered in our quest. The shadows of life have long ranges, the mist of darkness is of wide extent, the illusions of

life have many layers; hence a sudden intrusion of an idea from the psychic currents of life or opening into subtler layers of being should not pass for Truth. And the seeking soul will have to pass through the glittering vale of shadows before it can truly know itself.

The Upanisads give the challenging proposition: Self is Truth. Truth is self, for the search in the beginning is inward; and in this inward search a phantasmagoria is presented in the vital self, in the promptings of mind, in the ideas of reason, in the creativity of psychic dynamism; but none of them can present what the seeking soul is in quest of, though every one of them can introduce us into a subtle world of its own. Truth has its own light. It is, above anything, self-conscious.

Truth is self-luminous. Its luminosity cannot be borrowed. Its majesty is not reflected. This self-consciousness is what makes Truth differ from everything. The Brihadāranyaka Upanisad rightly points out: "when the light of the sun, the moon and the fire is put off, the light of Atman illumines all." Atman is self-illuminating. That is its native character.—(Brihadāranyaka, 4, 3, 6.)

The rhythm of the vital being, the calm repose of the mind, the transcendent activity of intelligence

can allow the light of Atman to reflect on the psychic being, and then can we understand that the light that enlightens all is in the heart of our being; this light is reflection of the original light of self. This light shines in purity for ever.

A distinction is drawn between the psychic light and the self-light. The former is reflected, the latter is original. The psychic light is possible because of the transparence of our psychic being, especially because of its purity. Where the psychic being is not fine, it cannot reflect the light of Atman upon itself; and, in such cases, the psychic consciousness becomes dim.

The psyche is born of the self and matter. It partakes the nature of both, hence it is luminous; but its luminosity is variable, because of the grossness of matter. The psyche owes its illumination to self, its pliability and plasticity to matter. Its luminosity has degrees, but the luminosity of Atman is constant and immobile. In meditation and contemplation the psychic luminosity increases, for there is in it the effort to concentrate its full being. In activity its luminosity is not so high because of the intensity of psychic matter more than psychic spirit.

Our psychic being is elastic. It admits of

expansion and contraction. Its luminous expansion has been the reason for often mistaking this expansiveness for Truth. The psychic expansiveness has its charm and attraction; it exhibits the immanental beauties hidden in the deep of the soul, its power and light, its softness and delicacy, its serene delight and brightness. But if the psychic being has its elasticity, it suffers also from contraction and rigidity. And it is in tune with all kinds of dynamism. Spirituality is often identified with the finer expression of psychic dynamism, for it affords freedom and expansion, freshness and vividness, knowledge and power. And the psychic fineness can be intensive enough to tear off the knots and to break the contraries and relativities of life.

The Upanisads admonish us not to linger with the psychic fineness and freshness on our way to freedom. The psychic fineness initiates us into the mysteries of the deeper layers of our being—it may show correspondence of our inner powers with cosmic agencies, but certainly it cannot give us the redemption which comes with the attainment of knowledge.

No doubt, with psychic fineness, new stretches of knowledge and imagination may be revealed to us, and this indeed is the attraction of life in the process of psychic unfoldment, but it cannot give us the light

of Truth. Truth in the Upanisads is neither static nor dynamic, and any concept either statical or dynamical cannot be comprehensive. The psychic fineness may acquaint us with supra-sensuous perceptions of supra-mental dynamism and present all the creative ideals of beauty, dignity and love, but still the dignity of self may not be comprehended.

Self transcends this immanental sublimity. It is the transcendent silence. But to characterize it as silence should not make it signify the dumb inertness of nature. It is the luminous silence, the silence that resides in the heart of things. It illumines all; but itself, as an object, always eludes our grasp. This silence is the plenum of being and consciousness. It is also delight or bliss, but this delight is not the delight of a finer radiant vibration of our psychic being, nor the delight of a cosmic vastness. It is the delight of unfettered being and uncovered consciousness. It is the *delight of Freedom*.

The self has the sense of fullness, ever-completeness and freedom. But it is fullness without content, completeness without fruition or growth, and freedom without resistance or tension. It is not the delight of life nor the delight of free movement. It is the delight of the illumined calm and the eternal poise.

The Upanisads exhibit fine aspiration to such existence and welcome it as Truth; and all limitations of consciousness are condemned as untruth.

No doubt such truth lies hidden from us by the veil of ignorance, but this veil shines in the light of Truth. The Sun is veiled by the mist which it reflects.

Truth is the ultimate concept in the Upanisads, for Truth is Being. The Upanisads do not indulge in the concepts, *viz.* beauty or goodness, for they represent the value-concepts which obtain in the world of creativeness. Truth is Existence, beyond creativeness and beyond appearance.

It may be said that Ananda ordinarily understood is a value-concept, for it represents an aspect of being which pleases. It is a positive worth and excites a feeling of appreciation. This Ananda is, therefore, an aspect which at least introduces some uniqueness not present in the other two aspects of being. Viewed from the general sense of pleasurableness or delightfulness it looks like that. But this kind of Ananda is to be distinguished from the pleasures accompanying desires or affecting the dynamic and vital side of our nature. There is Ananda of the vital mind, there is Ananda of the luminous expression of being.

But the former is not the latter. The former is

desired as something positive which is satisfied by an assimilation of things external or the fulfilment of growths potential. The vital-mind cannot obtain the satisfaction otherwise than in a realization of an object which it seeks to appropriate. Though the pleasures of the vital being consist in such seekings, yet considered closely it will seem that such seekings are ultimately the expression of the vital. The vital being finds pleasure in the seeking because it feels an expansion and an elasticity. Truly even in the vital-mind the desires give pleasure only because they find pathways for the vital-expansion. The vital being without this sense of expansion in desires should not desire anything. Indeed in this form of expansion there is always a reference to some other, but this other vital-being absorbs and assimilates to itself and thus enjoys its expansiveness. The true delight is not then in the achievement of object, but in the vital-expansion. This proves that life is delight. In this identification, the sense of worth may cross the mind, but this sense of worth does not really lie in producing or projecting anything concrete, but in the removal of a restricted, and the enjoyment of an expanded, self.

In the higher forms of expression, there is not the seeking of desires, though there is finer movement

of life. And this becomes a clear proposition as life unmasks itself.

No doubt, life represents delight, and the movement of life is movement of supernal delight. This experience at once changes our theory of delight, and in this stage life becomes the object of search and not desires, for life exhibits the essence of delight.

But the delight of life is the delight of being. It does not lie in achievement. It lies in expression. Hence, though it will be correct to say that there is delight in existence, it will be incorrect to say that this represents really a value-concept understood in the sense of representing an aspect of being not reflected in the concept of being itself. This establishes the great Truth of the Upanisads. Self is Ananda. Consciousness is delight.

It is often customary to say that the self has triune expression as being, consciousness and delight; and these may be conceived as the supra-mental currents of life in its complete transcendence, supra-individual and supra-cosmic.

The Vaisnavic persuasion has carried the dynamic conception of reality even to the transcendent, though in this dynamic expression either in delight or in consciousness, it does not see any definite purpose. The

idea of a purpose in divine expression carries with it *a sense of limitation* consistent in the reference to a world of creation, but inconsistent in the reference to the transcendent nature of reality.

The old-world idea of a meaning in every movement of life is happily not present in the Upanisads; for meaning, purpose and value come in when the vision of life is intercepted, and the movement of life takes a reflex current and creates self and other references. But this reflex current does not obtain in the spontaneous and free expression of consciousness and delight, where we have the free movement of life without any meaning, theoretic or pragmatic.

Vaisnavism is impressed with the dynamism of spiritual life, but cannot see beyond and feel the silence of it.

The Upanisads present both the dynamic and the silent aspects of life, but without hesitation it can be said that they emphasize the spiritual silence above the spiritual flowering as the more important of the two.

Life has its silence. Life has its movement. The two are associated in the life's plan. But more often the silence of life, its poise and calm, is lost in the dance; and hence often we notice that silence is mistaken for inertness, quite ignoring the fact that

fullness, completeness and luminosity are associated with silence.

The prophet of creative evolution has been attracted to the continuous flowering of life, so much so that he fails to see the majesty and the dignity of silence. He is so much enraptured with life's music, that he fails to appreciate the cadence of life, softly passing into silence.

Bergson is more conscious of the perpetual flux of life than of its soft repose and serene calm; he has, therefore, insisted on the free and continuous movement of life, but he has not the finer perception of the life's law of expansion and silence. The facts in creation are, indeed, nothing before the urge to create. Tension in creation passes through varying degrees of intensity. But tension is not all life. Bergson has ignored this aspect, quite forgetting that life is poise as well as movement. The more life has its fine relaxation, as in poetic imagination or philosophic meditation, the more it feels its higher aspect.

Free creation and free movement are the expressions of life, but the expansive and illumined silence is its being. Life seeks freedom to express itself, to expand itself. Expression, at bottom, is a tendency to expansion. In wide expression life may lose its

creative urge, for creativeness is the assertion of life in resistance and tension; it looks full life, because the dynamism of life in its vigour and intensiveness is presented there.

But if life has tension it has also relaxation; and this relaxation is not the inverse of life—it is not inertness, it shows a finer phase in expansion. Expansion is life in its widest diffusion and finer relaxation. Concentration involves tension, and life as creativeness maintains a perpetual tension.

Life in its higher reaches does not exhibit tension. Creativeness is an effort, but the finest creations are effortless; the less resistance it has to overcome, the better the creation. Life as creation has to overcome resistance; the delight it feels then is the delight of victory, the joy of movement. But the free movement of life without resistance is a higher experience, which we find only in the self-expression and hence this movement has no definite end to aim at or achieve, it becomes at once differentiated from free creation. Free expression is higher than free creation; because it has to meet no opposition.

Self-expression, therefore, represents life or spirit better than creation. The creative freedom is an experience inferior to self-expression. Expression

without tension is really the true criterion of spirit. Bergson could not feel the luminous expression of spirit, without the urge of creation.

Creativeness then is a sort of limitation. This limitation is due to Maya. Maya is the self-limiting power through which spirit filters down through the descending degrees of consciousness and delight. Hence, in the realm of creation, the spirit is exhibited in the gradation of restricted expression from the mute nature to luminous beings.

The realm of Maya embraces the finest and the crudest forms of life, from the luminous Isvara to the mute creation. Though Maya is the principle of self-limitation of Isvara, still in it is included the finest blossoming of life, through the hierarchies of being. It also exhibits life in its beauty and majesty, but these are false glimmers in it.

The wide reaches of existence, with its finer rhythm in consciousness and bliss, is indeed a promise in spiritual life; and when the soul has gone into such experiences, it has all the sense cf resistance and tension withdrawn. There is greater awareness, easier movements of life in an endless current of bliss and consciousness.

The face of silence is revealed where the dynamic

currents of the soul, even in their finest, have not their expression; and this face of silence introduces us into unique experience in spiritual life, wherefrom the least difference between the infinite and the finite is removed; and the soul is elevated from the world of relative spiritual values and ideals to the world of Absolute spirit; from the realm of creative expression and dynamic fullness to the realm of unclouded Awareness of Self.

Spiritual ideal in the Upanisads exhibits the majesty of self and its transcendence, and this experience of immediate awareness is unique because of its timelessness.

Spiritual life in time is a life in fine dynamism and expression and is really a valuable experience, but it fails to present the uniqueness of spirit as transcending Time. This kind of life beyond the touch and influence of time is hailed as the true spiritual realization.—(Kaủsitaki Upanisad, Ch. 2, 4.)

Hence it is necessary to distinguish two paths in spiritual life—the path of direct and the path of indirect attainment of Truth. The former acquaints us immediately with the reality of self by producing in us fine *metaphysical insight*, reared up by discrimination, reflexion and concentration.

This path essentially presupposes that psychic fineness which can immediately discern the Truth of reality from the errors of ignorance and appearance. It presupposes fine philosophic discrimination and receptiveness which can feel that Truth can never be in the making.

Spiritual freedom implies the complete self-transcendence of space, time and causality.

Yājñavalkya has the courage to preach this doctrine of self as Freedom and the self as Ananda. One who knows it attains Swaraj, the freedom, in self-freedom from the false glamour of life, even of the finely attuned psychic life. To be spiritual is to be always conscious of the Self, which is Freedom.

The bondage comes because of our tendency to seek a cause and a finality in life. These tendencies are native with the unenlightened intellect. To such an intellect a rationale of life is offered by the Upanisads in its theory of a creative God endowed with intelligence, power and bliss; but such a God is not the Truth of the Upanisads. It is customary to speak of such a God as the cause of the universe, but the Upanisads are keenly alive to the fact that it is a concession to human ignorance. The Upanisads always speak of the superior and inferior

Brahman, but the former is Truth, the latter is true in the light of relative experience. The former is the absolute, the latter, the super-subjective and the super-conscious self.

The superior Brahman denies all metaphysical or spiritual differences. The inferior Brahman unites them. The former is supra-cosmic transcendence, the latter is the cosmic unity. Between these two the Upanisads have attempted a Synthesis, by saying that cosmic unity is the appearance of the supra-cosmic reality, which it really transcends. The cosmic unity has no absolute existence; it is, in fact, the concentration of the transcendence; being a concentration it is *more seeming than real.* It is only relatively real.

The lower Brahman or Isvara has not the same metaphysical reality as the superior Brahman. The one is related to the mutations of life and appearances, the other is not. The one is conceived as creative, preservative and destructive from the cosmological viewpoint, as redemptive from the theological viewpoint and as supra-subject from the epistemological viewpoint. But the Upanisads fix Truth beyond all mutations, cosmic and psychic, and all dynamism, material or spiritual.

The path of Wisdom opens really when

psychic mind develops the power of seeing not through customary logical categories but through psychic and transcendent intuitions (Mundaka Upanisad, 3, 1, 5; Katha Upanisad, 1, 3, 12). Indeed the pathway to realization has never been logical, but intuitive. And this, again, may be of two kinds. Intuition may be tinged with psychism and may be a spiritual process. Such intuition in its finer oscillations can give us the synoptic vision of Truth, but cannot present its face of silence.

Psychic intuition may enter into the fine delicacies of life, and may cover the fine dynamical currents of the soul. The psychic being is in direct correspondence with nature's powers: it can feel their touch and correspondence, their impress and their force, but where the psychic responsiveness is acutely keen the psychic intuition will reveal the harmonies and the fine setting of life. In fact, it will enjoy the fine currents of life and gradually a vastness of being associated with it.

Psychic intuition may feel the play of the dynamic divine in the mundane and the supra-mundane expression of life. When the psychic intensity and acuteness finds its fullest expression, it gives us the cosmic and synoptic view of existence with its struc-

tural beauties, with its soft and sublime harmonies, with its light and darkness, with its sweetness and fierceness, with its creations and destructions, with its centripetal projections and centrifugal withdrawnness all blended into a well-poised harmony.

But with the increased psychic receptivity the feeling becomes evident of the supra-cosmic movement of life and spirit in its finest expression where it oversteps the realm of form and passes into formless expression, from the world of personality into the impersonal. All our movements in this height of existence take an impersonal character. Love, knowledge, delight no longer stir us with their personal touch and intoxication; they grow serene in the setting of the soul and not of the person.

On this account they are more forceful, since then they have become unfettered and all-embracive and spontaneous in their expression. And they acquire this character from the *vision of identity*. The whole being becomes suffused in impersonal or super-personal love and knowledge and feels their presence in the heart of everything, great or small, mundane or supra-mundane.

In the path of progressive realization the soul rises from the concrete play of delight and consciousness

in human and cosmic affairs to supra-mental expression in Isvara, where life is spontaneous in its expression, because free from the restrictions of matter.

Consciousness shines in its pure ray serene because of its freedom from ignorance, delights in its splendour, because of its fullness of being and life. The seeking soul through psychic intuition may approach this consummation—he may enjoy the emergence of finer and subtler life as he is drawn more and more inward, and ultimately may come to feel the finer expression of dynamic divine, luminous, bright, free and blissful, and may enjoy a dynamic identification with Isvara.

The Upanisads accept such a psychic opening, receptivity and realization as indeed a very fine and high consummation—for it ultimately presents the privilege of a constant fellowship with the dynamic divine. But such souls cannot interfere with the *cosmic regulation* and the *cosmic uniformity*, which are in the complete control of Isvara. And they need not interfere, for with increased knowledge they find the perfect accuracy of the world system, its perfect concord and harmony, however discordant it may appear to the less developed souls. At times the dynamic identification makes them the fit transmitters of the divine purpose,

but more often they enjoy the divine transparence of being, its ineffable joy and transcendent Ananda.

But the complete transcendence of self cannot possibly be attained by them, unless they forgo this consummation, however fine and lofty, for the still loftier consummation, in the transcendent silence of being, before which the finest expression of life and its radiant beauties pale into insignificance, because that really elevates them to a plane of existence which the psychic life with all its fine promises and cosmic intuitions and promptings even cannot encompass and embrace. The mystic soon discovers that there is no truth higher than self. The Upanisads also enjoin "thou art that" (*Tattvamasi*).

The Upanisads recognize the four states of consciousness : waking, dream, deep-sleep and Turiya (Mandukya Upanisad). In the first the psyche works through mind and the senses. In dream, the psyche works through the mental vestiges. In deep-sleep it is inactive due to inertia. In the fourth state the psychic being has the finest transparence and reveals to us the unique state of Transcendence. The Self is exhibited in complete isolation from all psychic mutations. It may be difficult for the intellect to conceive such an existence, because intellect in conceiving it

imposes upon it some conditions of its own. It eludes our grasp but it is the ever-present Now without the projections into the past and the former. In the waking and the dream the psychic life works through time; the deep-sleep and the Turiya have no reference to Time. The time-sense drops in these states; hence they reveal a phase of consciousness not otherwise accessible; the difference between the deep-sleep and the Turiya is that in the former though the time-sense is momentarily shadowed, in the latter it is completely denied. A man, retiring from deep-sleep, does not return with the illusoriness of time, the man retiring from the fourth state does so return. This at once marks off this state as unique, as exhibiting the conscious life transcending time and psychic mutations and changes in time.

II

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE IN THE GITA

The book that has been and is still the main-spring in Hindu life is the Gita. The Gita is the book of books. It is generally said that the "Upanisads are the cows, the milkman is Krisna, and the milk is the Gita". It shows an inner affinity of the teachings of the Upanisads and the Gita. Though the final conclusion may be the same, still the approach has been different; and the Gita presents all the complexities of life more than the Upanisads and exhibits a finer synthesis of the springs of life in their full setting. The Gita does not lose the self in the dazzling light of transcendence but rather seeks the descent of the supramental light in its mellowed grandeur and soft lustre on earth. The Upanisads recognize the centripetal tendency of the soul to merge itself in the Absolute; the Gita accepts this and discovers the spiritual descent other than the creative descent in love, power and wisdom to organize the values and transform the tendencies of life, individual and social. The Gita presents the rare picture of the

fine synthesis of spiritual dynamism with spiritual transcendence.

The Gita as Philosophy presents a synthesis of thoughts, and as spiritual discipline it presents a harmonization of spiritual cultures. Its outlook is synthetical, its basic discipline is harmony.

The philosophical background of the Gita is not, as is ordinarily supposed, mere culling of elements of different philosophy, blended in a whole somewhat forcefully. The Gita is a book of direct inspiration and draws its philosophy from life; and what may appear as conflicting in theories, may be finally adjusted in the higher harmony of life. The Gita is especially attractive because it avoids the excess and the extreme of theories and blends them harmoniously. It avoids conflicts in life. It could avoid conflict in theories. Theory is the reflection of life.

The first conflict that is so much evident is the conflict between nature and spirit, and the Gita, instead of resolving the conflict by rejecting or denying nature, accepts it fully and envisages a divine play through it. Nature is; but nature is the reflection of spirit, it is the instrument for cosmic play. Spirit does not emerge from nature. It cannot be evolved. Nature is *spirit thrown out*. It is spirit in its eccentric

movement. It is not spirit in its inner movement in self.

With the reference to the two movements, distinctions are drawn between two kinds of "Prakriti", the lower and the higher; the para and the apara (Chapter VII, 4, 5). The apara is the spiritual movement outward, the para is the spiritual expression inward. Because the one is outward, it shows limitation in space and time. It is really the movement of spirit in space and time. This limitation of movement in space and time makes it appear as distinct from spirit, but really it is spirit, reflected in the mirror of space and time. Prakriti has the connotation of creativeness, but this creativeness is essentially of spirit and is not of an alien substance, though in its creative expression spirit has not its finest manifestation. But it would be the height of philosophic indiscretion to think that Prakriti is extra-spiritual existence and is the dynamic principle which through gradual fineness emerges in spirit. Matter is spirit with its radiance dimmed and elasticity restrained.

The second conflict that is apparent is the conflict between nature and finite spirit. Nature is looked upon anti-spiritual, and spirit is cabined within it. The

necessity is felt to free spirit from its slavery of nature, if not by actual dissociation, then by complete suppression. The Gita resolves this conflict by making nature the handmaid of spirit (Chapter XIII, 22).

Nature has its finer attraction to spirit; for without its luminous reflection it cannot move to a finality or purpose. It has an unconscious attraction to spirit, for the great effort of nature is always to rise into and enjoy finality. It exhibits therein its finest emergence and finds its highest consummation. The finer the creative emergence, the freer is the play of spirit; nature in its finest growth reveals a character, svattvic luminousity, which is different, no doubt, from spiritual luminousity and self-expression. But the luminousity of svattva enables it to reflect the spirit and enjoy the vividness of the spirit. The luminousity of Prakriti may rise and fall, but the luminousity of spirit is constant. Hence the two cannot be the same. In the creative play there is the necessity to emerge more and more into spiritual consciousness and this becomes possible because spirit can affiliate matter to its nature, partially, if not completely.

Matter and spirit are the two forces in the arena, apparently opposed and conflicting, but in truth matter

is dominated by spirit, just as spirit is attracted to matter for its creative expression on the physical plane.

Matter implicitly surrenders itself to spirit, for therein it finds its full satisfaction; spirit shapes it and moulds it in its eccentric urges (Chap. IX, 8).

The domination of matter by spirit is complete in the divine and not in the human, for matter cannot there exhibit its opposition in the divine; in man the opposition is evident. But it can be surmounted, and the degree in which it is surmounted determines man's degree of superiority. This degree determines the hierarchy of man and manifests his supermanhood. Man becomes the superman if he can control, regulate and put to his use the natural forces that are working in him. Spiritual evolution is a distinct tendency towards the resolution of conflict between nature and man, not simply by controlling the obstructive insurgent impulses, but also by transforming matter into its transparent nature and making it the finest vehicle of spirit's expression through mundane and supermundane spheres. When inertia, grossness and irresponsiveness are replaced by activity, transparence and luminosity, then the original conflict of matter and spirit dies out; and spirit finds a channel of fine expression through elastic matter. And then only it becomes possible to realize its nature

as divine Prakriti. Matter is not all gross. It is plastic, transparent and luminous, but not conscious. The resistance put forth by matter helps to evoke the fuller consciousness. The initial resistance is naturally withdrawn with the evolution of finer understanding. Nature's forces are looked upon as the movement of the divine energy or Prakriti.

The third conflict is between the finite soul and the divine. The Gita resolves this conflict by characterizing the souls as belonging to the Parā, superior nature of the divine (Chap. VII, 5). The finite souls are conscious, nature has no consciousness. Ananda goes with consciousness. Spirit is consciousness and delight.

The Gita in thus affiliating the finite souls to the divine assuredly opens for them new vistas of realization, movement and life, not only in the transcendence of spirit but also in the world of matter. The very knowledge that souls are spirit and not matter makes the position of the Gita different from that of the emergent evolutionists. The Gita, instead of tracing the origin of the soul from matter, rather makes it subservient to spirit and, therefore, the original conflict which appears before the unillumined souls dissolves before the light of knowledge—and the finite sees the

play of the divine in the affairs of human or cosmic life and even in the forces of cohesion and disruption of the material forces. The adaptation in life becomes easier, for the movement of life in all spheres becomes spiritual.

No doubt the expression of the divine through nature cannot be identical with the expression of the divine through the soul; but all the same the original conflict dies away and life on this plane does not become meaningless—our actions, our evolutions and thoughts, our organizations acquire a spiritual colouring and meaning. Though they cannot represent the fullness of spiritual expression, they are not for that reason to be dismissed as possessing no spiritual values. The movement of life is never dissociated from spiritual values, whether its direction be inward or outward. The only difference is that in one case it has to meet opposition and resistance which it gradually surmounts by the finer form of emergence of nature's forces; in the other case its movement is quite spontaneous, free, for it is completely a movement in life divine with ineffable light.

The Gita does not recognize the least conflict between the *finite divine* and the *infinite divine*. The

former achieves better life, greater freedom; finer being in the latter.

The conflict arises from the ignorance of spirit and the false egoism and the self-sense which it creates. It obscures the history and the divine orientation of the self, its luminous consciousness, its independence and dissociation from matter, however fine and transparent. Not only this. Ignorance obscures the integral association of the finite man and God and the identity of their nature. Ignorance, therefore, originates false values and false individualities, introducing conflict in place of spiritual harmony and divine peace. The peace divine is the heritage of the soul and not the conflict to which it is often exposed in the world of claims and counter-claims arising from the false view of life and its mistaken adaptations.

The Gita dissolves the conflict of the divine as Transcendent and the divine as Immanent by showing that the dynamism of the divine is instrumental to its manifestation through cosmic activities either directly or indirectly through the devas and shining deities, for the universe is the scene of God's divine play. And for the play He throws the world out of Him and resides in the heart of things, for He is the essence of things and being. But the cosmic manifestation cannot

exhaust His nature and being, hence He enjoys His Transcendence uninterruptedly, which is His true being. The Gita is eloquent about the immanence of God (Ch. IX, 5). It sees the cosmic picture of the divine through created and uncreated beings. The great stream of life is manifesting itself through the conflicts on earth and the harmony of the heavens, through creation and destruction, through stress and strife, through the radiant beatific forms, through the orbs of the heavens, through the myriads of beings.

Such dynamic spiritual expression through the unceasing flow of life can be felt and its truth realized when the inner vision is opened in fine reverence. But the Gita does not end with the expression of spirit shining in glory, radiant in beauty, vast in its expansiveness and embraciveness, unceasing in its flow, fierce in the strides of death. The divine life extends far beyond the world of manifestation and stretches into the world of silence and Peace, in the Trinal Expression of consciousness, being and bliss (Ananda). This is Divine *per se*.

The Gita synthesizes the Transcendent divine and the cosmic divine by conceiving the latter as the dynamic expression of the former. The height of Transcendence shows the integral character of the

divine, in which prevail luminous silence, ineffable delight and unconquerable Peace, beyond all tension of divine energism in the effort of self-manifesting and self-expressing. In the realm of the divine silence, the questions of concrete values, of the progress of souls in illumination and righteousness, of the control of nature by spirit, all vanish, for these problems originate with the qualities of life incidental to its expression.

The Gita conceives the divine descent in two ways :—(i) the original descent in creation; (ii) the timely descent for divine interference in cosmic adjustments and for redemption (Ch. IV, 7, 8, 9). The first is the descent in Power. The descent in Power in the first case has no definite purpose. It is spontaneous movement of His will. But the descent for intervention in cosmic adjustments has purpose: the direction of the forces in such a way as can be helpful to the realization of the divine life in its righteousness, harmony and majesty throughout the cosmos. But the finest descent is descent in love and knowledge in the human heart. The first two of these descents exhibit the intrepid movement of the dynamic divine through its imperious majesty and indomitable will, the last of the descents exhibits the peaceful and illuminative movement of the dynamic divine through the seeking

hearts to purify them with the touch of holiness, to redeem them with its saving grace, to suffuse them with the impress of its beauty, and to fill them with its divine Ananda.

But these two kinds of descent are not in conflict. Power creates, Love beautifies; Power organizes, Love invests with delight. And life is power or love. But beyond Power or Love is the wisdom which enjoys the harmony through the cosmic dance of life, finally passing into the luminous calm of Transcendent silence.

The Gita does away with the conflict between human will and divine will, the human agency and the divine agency. In the affairs of life the Gita acknowledges the superiority of the divine will to the human will; and will experiences conflict, obstruction so long as it is not merged in the divine will.

The divine will is the cosmic regulative force, and the human will, when it is regulated by its limited knowledge and reference to self, cannot be effective since it cannot draw from the divine power and will. Such regulation of will binds us to the law of cause and effect in the moral universe and none can be free from the consequences of this law.

The autonomy of will, which surrounds it with a spiritual halo, is not the final word in the Gita. The

Gita finds that, even in the free movement of will, the sense of agency is what binds us to the effects of Karma; and, however unmindful we may be of them, they come unsought and as a natural consequence.

The law of Karma has a natural and a spiritual aspect. The natural aspect is crude, where the agency is looked upon as an agency of a unit in society and where the movement is sought for utilitarian or hedonic satisfaction. Such a sense binds us, for it cannot give free expression to the creativeness of the soul. The Gita seeks to free the soul from the intricate mazes of desires.

But even if the free activity and expression of the finite self is conceived and exhibited in the spiritual nature of man, still the fullness of this nature is not properly manifested unless man can transcend his limited spiritual dynamism and can ascend to realization of the dynamic identification with the divine. The movement of spirit is always free, but this freedom has its natural limitation. To transcend this limitation, the Gita urges upon us to affiliate the divine will in us by completely removing the thought of the self.

Free creative activity and autonomy are a matter of degree, and are in direct ratio with the fuller knowledge of will as the reflection of the divine will.

Spirit is always free; the human will is partially free, and the divine will is completely free.

In the organization of will a hierarchy is clearly visible. All wills have not attained the same kind of freedom, for they do not feel their essential spiritual nature.

And, therefore, in the affairs of life all wills do not play equal parts or perform identical functions. Will exhibits its finer nature when it can free itself from the claims of life, which are more often natural.

But the finest exhibition of will is possible when the human will becomes identified with the divine. This identification is dynamic identification, for it then perceives the vaster cosmic movements through the instrumentality of the divine.

This dynamic identification elevates man to the level of a superman. The superman has no personal will, because he has no personal claims. He moves with cosmic urges. And it is natural. The more spiritual we grow, the more can we enjoy the focussing of the divine in man—Spirit is free activity, and the more this nature is assimilated in our being, the better we can enjoy the impress of the divine nature—which is spirit *per se*.

The superman has unfettered will, expansive

vision. He feels the divine urge and rises above the limitations of human will. He may not always feel the identification, for it depends upon the degree of his responsiveness to the divine will. But this identification does not in the least fix him in a determined course, for he transcends the limitation of his being and feels the reality of the cosmic will and its supremacy. He has no will of himself. The only will he possesses is the divine will. The world is changed for him, and the old values and concepts lose themselves before newer visions and finer impulses. Determinism is possible when the human will is controlled by the divine. The true superman transcends this stage and feels the truth of the divine will shaping and moulding the cosmic forces.

The little freedom that spirit in ordinary man reflects is the freedom of the divine, for man is divine; and this freedom becomes greater the more we realize that the spirit is ultimately divine. In man, it is limited in its power and expression.

Man with the yearning for the divine becomes the superman by assimilating the divine in himself. This is right aspiration, for man has been made after the image of God. That is his true nature. The fall is due to his ignorance and inertia of being, which

confine his knowledge and activity. The evolution of man into superman is possible when ignorance and inertia can be expunged from his nature, exposing him to the currents of the spiritual force.

Man is yet to be. This would be possible not by assimilating the dark forces of nature, but by attracting the bright forces. Personality in man is sacred, for this indicates the assertion of spirit and freedom amongst the functioning of nature's forces. But the end of evolution and emergence is not completed in the formation of personality, but in still throwing it open to the indrawn cosmic forces which free it from the impress of individuality and dissolve the psychological and the biological complexes. The complexes constitute a barrier to the inflow of the divine and to the finer emergence of man into superman.

The superman is the salt of the universe, because he reflects in him the divine nature. He inspires the dawn of a new civilization in culture and adaptation because he intuitively realizes the course of the divine expression through the particular cycles of evolution. He starts a cycle by being instrumental to the divine. The causality of character and the creative freedom of the superman are truly spiritual; he is not bound

by nature's causality, for he does not move, the divine moves in him.

The superman then has an ascent first in knowledge to feel the identification and then has a descent to regulate and shape the cosmic order according to the divine will. And more often such descent is synonymous with the divine descent.

In cosmic configuration the divine descent is a far-off event. But the divinity works through inspired agents. The supermen are such agents. By the fineness of their being, by their wise passiveness they can receive the impress of the supramental will and make themselves effective in the affairs of men. The supramental force finds in them the fit media of expression and manifests either love, knowledge or power as the occasion demands and the situation requires.

Besides this kind of descent of the supramental through the superman, the Gita conceives the direct descent of God in the form of incarnation. This descent in the realm of nature is necessary from time to time to effect adjustments in the cosmic order. Such descent is very rare but very effective. It initiates cycles of life in holiness, righteousness and even in power.

The Gita exhibits God as Power, Love and Consciousness (Chap. X). The power aspect of the divine is seen in the regulation of the cosmic forces, in setting up new currents of life through human society. But Power does not work blindly. It moves on to create conditions for the finer expression of life in love, beauty and wisdom. The evolution of life indeed in love or beauty and the expression of what prevails in the inwardness of divine life cannot be possible unless the power is there to mould the material into fitness for such an expression.

The divine life is more often associated with love and bliss, but not with power, and this is possibly due to the fact, that power creates terror by the changes which it effects, and the human mind is naturally averse from change. It moves in the beaten track. It cannot always soar high and see with detachment the beauties of the changes which invest freshness and introduce elasticity in life. Power intervenes in cosmic affairs to make finer creations, to reveal the sweeter harmonies; Power does not work blindly. It overrides at times new hopes and expectations born of limited vision and it takes us unawares and looks terrible because we cannot welcome it and see the beneficent nature inherent in it.

Human nature, with all its fineness, has its inertia, and is, therefore, slow to recognize changes and the beauties of power. Power represents the dynamic divine in its majesty, in its intrepid activity. It shakes the heavens, convulses the earth to bring out a new evolution, to start new values and to express hidden beauties. It crushes the obstructive forces, it humbles the proud, it exalts the righteous; but the heart of power is love, for love leans on power. Love represents the softer side of divine nature in its finer harmony, when it is free from obstructions it has to meet in creation. Power paves the way for harmony and love. Power overrides opposition; Love wins by quietening the opposition. Power creates, love harmonizes; Power destroys, Love fills. Power without love loses its charm; Love without power loses its effect. In the economy of life both have their place and purpose. And to ignore either is to lose the zest of life.

The divine life, besides being power and love, is also knowledge, it reflects the infinite existence in its fineness, order and relations, and introduces into the world complete peace in divine wisdom.

Power and Love belong to the rhythm of life, Peace to its silence. Love gives the music of life,

Peace its illumined calm. The tree of life has its roots up and its foliage down. The trunk and the foliage represent life in its fine music, far-reaching harmonies; the root represents calm beyond all the urges of life.

If the Gita as a body of principles is a fine synthesis, as a regulative art of life it is a fine discipline.

Here also the Gita resolves the conflicts between the different paths of approach, action, love and knowledge. There are other forms of discipline, *e.g.* the control of breath, the practice of meditation (Chap. II, 6). But, whatever they may be, the Gita looks upon them as the methods of establishing harmony in the different parts of our nature.

In Hinduism spiritual disciplines, before the age of the Gita, were varied, and these disciplines were looked upon as involving inner contradictions. Yoga was opposed to Samkhya, devotion to knowledge, knowledge to Karma. The genius of Krishna was necessary to establish a synthesis of spiritual disciplines.

Krisna had insight into the value and the economy of all the forces working in life, and the utter impossibility of suppressing them. Instead of denying anyone of them, he was anxious to spiritualize

all of them and hence the whole spiritual adaptation in the Gita consists in finding the spiritual values of them all. Every form of discipline meets this end. Everyone of them helps the spiritual adaptation. Knowledge gives the finest wisdom, devotion the dynamic identification, Karma finds the effective expression of the divine through life. The categorical distinctions of the disciplines rise from a false philosophy which cannot resolve conflicts between the different aspects of existence.

Wisdom reveals the transcendent identity; devotion, the dynamic identity; and Karma is the regulative force.

No doubt, such Karma is not the principle of daily adaptation, nor can the ordinary devotion rise to this height. Hence a distinction is made between spirituality as discipline and spirituality as expression and formation.

Karma as a discipline has to pass through stages. In the Gita Karma is conceived first as duties imposed from the station in which the thought of self is transcended by the thought of Svadharma, the performance of which gives us merit and helps the right regulation of the formative forces of society. The Gita in thus enjoining upon the calls of life has a finer vision than

utility and introduces the touch of righteousness, which gives greater values and reflects finer truths than utilitarian ethics.

The conception of Dharma introduces the brighter nature of Karma which forms into righteous habit and finally helps the finer realizations and turnings of life—at least it connects the story of life revealed here and the story of life to be revealed elsewhere. Those who think that Sri Krisna's appeal to Arjuna to do his duty as a Kshatriya is a hedonic or utilitarian appeal really misconceive the true meaning of the Gita. Svadharma may bring in affluence and happiness, but they do not form its finer nature. It introduces the conception of ethical values. No doubt, it seeks its objective in moral life, but this objective, rightly understood, is the preservation and the organization of moral forces and ideals.

To unfold the finer ethical nature still, the Gita urges the performance of Niskama Karma. Here the finer ethical intuition is before us, the intuition that recognizes the autonomy of spiritual life, its free movement, independent of any purpose. This joy it finds in free movement, for Niskama Karma, rightly understood, is the movement of the free creative spirit. It is not really Karma, it is free creativity and move-

ment. It really introduces us into the realm of spirits, and exhibits the nature of spirit as free will. Kant recognizes this autonomy of practical reason, but he has not the insight to recognize the spirit in man as the reflection of the spirit divine. Nor could he find joy in such free expression of life. But the Gita could see this, hence it has been possible for it to see further. Work is worship, ethical life is dedicated life. Kant could not find this saving grace in his theory of duty. He has to call for the intervention of God to work out a synthesis of duty and blessedness. His greatest defect is that he conceives barriers between the different aspects of life. The Gita, on the other hand, unfolds the finer mingling of the different phases of life. Karma has its delight, for Karma is the principle of free expression of life and Ananda; therefore, with the finer harmony of life, the softer chords of our nature reveal that Kàrma is really worship; it is ultimately the offering of our nature to the urges of spirit for its expression through us. In this sense of offering we can realize the finer spiritual synthesis of our being. Spirit offers, for it is anxious to throw off the individualistic sense, and in free offering there is spontaneous reception. The dynamic divine

fills our being, because it finds the self emptied in the consecration (Chapter XII).

And what is partially expressed in Karma finds its full realization in spiritual devotion. If Karma is the free expression of spirit in the realm of values, devotion is the free inward offering. Devotion finds the way to the full dynamic identification, together with all the chastened joys and serene delights of the dedicated self.

Dedication is the initial stage of devotion; spiritual identification and dynamic fruition are its consummation. Devotion, ordinarily understood, maintains a distance between the worshipper and the worshipped. Devotion is the inner psychic opening which allows a perpetual stream of love and joy, if there is no obstruction or active assertion from our side. *Assertion* creates the barrier, and keeps man ever human. Devotion has a tendency to push our evolution by instilling and suffusing our being with the spiritual currents. The life of consecration is, therefore, important for it removes the humanistic sense and impresses the divine in man. Man is always to be; devotion reveals supramental fineness and the beauties of the divine nature and fills our being with its impress. If the thought of self could be removed,

and devotion helps us to remove it, it has a natural tendency to impress us with spiritual identity; but this identification will be dynamic, because devotion cannot go beyond concrete spiritual fruition. Its joy is the joy of the concrete. Devotion is the indrawing force, Karma is the outdrawing force. The fromer helps us to realize our spiritual nature, the latter releases the free activity of spirit through cosmic and human affairs.

The dynamic identification which is the promise of devotion in the Gita is a very important stage in spiritual unfolding. The Gita differs from the ordinary devotional attitude in laying clear emphasis upon this identification, which, instead of being a bar to the realization of Transcendence, really helps it (Ch. XI, 54). The spiritual life is transcendence as well as fullness and intrepid activity.

III

CONCRETE SPIRITUALITY
OF
THE BHAGAVATA PURANA.

The Puranas form a vast literature of Hinduism. Orthodox opinions hold that they in the main represent and preach the ideas of the Vedas and the Upanisads in the form of stories and they are looked upon as the histories of the race and its civilization; indeed many materials are there to give a lurid picture of Hindu Life at particular epochs.

All the literatures under the Puranas have not the same importance., Some are rich in cosmologies, some rich in historical surveys of a definite period. Most of them present a philosophical background of life, for the Hindus present the synthetic view of life and try to formulate its ways in this light. Life and philosophy have been always associated in Hinduism, and philosophy originates out of the reflections and intuitions of life. History, art, literature and social movements are all integrated and looked

upon as expressive of life in its various movements. The Puranas of all literatures reflect this tendency of Hinduism. It will be evident to anyone of ordinary intelligence that the early literatures are not systems of thought, but expressions of synthetic life. The Hindu exhibits conserving tendencies, for life to him does not emerge in new values, or new grades of expression; and, therefore, there is a tendency in Hinduism to affiliate all phases of thought and life to the ancient currents of ideas. The Hindus are not irresponsive to changes in life and varieties of thoughts and ideals, but they see in them the reflections of the old or the reappearance of the old in a new colour or setting. Hence they have been able in their outlook on life, social, philosophical and religious, to trace a consistent uniformity behind the temporary changes. Hinduism is indeed conservatism, but even as conservatism it has not denied free movement of thought construction. Creativeness is apparent, though the entire character exhibits a structural unity and continuity. This attitude explains the inner affinity between the different forms of cultural expression.

Hinduism is constructive conservatism. It creates but keeps up a continuity with the past. It is responsive to streams of thought; it is keenly appreciative of the

rich current of spirituality which, like the refreshing current of the Ganges, has ever fertilized the soil of India.

The Puranas are many, but the one that is most important as a background of a definite spirituality and constructive philosophy is the Bhāgavata Puraṇa. It is a book of books. It exhibits dignity and beauty of a very high order, but what is more it exhibits a high moral purity and inspiring spirituality. In this respect its place is very high amongst the ancient literature of the Hindus and the orthodox Hindu looks upon it with deep reverence and regards it as the commentary upon Brahma-sutras by Badaryana himself. Whatever truth may be contained in it there is no doubt, that the Bhāgavata Purana is one of the classics of Hindu Literature. It is the basis of the philosophic school of the Vaisnavas.

The Bhāgavata school represents a definite tendency of thought, which cannot be easily traced in the Upanisads or in the Vedas. Attempts have been made to trace out the seeds of its teachings in the ancient literatures, but the Bhāgavata school appears to be a definite tendency with an emphasis more upon devotional spirituality than upon the transcendent wisdom of the Upanisads. The Bhāgavata indeed opens

with fine emphasis upon transcendent Truth from which emerges the life of shadows. But the entire teachings of the Bhāgavata reflect some delicate differences from the teachings of the Upanisads.

The Bhāgavata represents a great synthetic constructive effort in which the diverse claims of Knowledge, Yoga and devotion have met.

It indeed shows the complete acquaintance of the concepts of life and spirituality of the ancients, but instead of accepting them intact, it shows a clear definite and synthetic effort to harmonize the apparently diverse concepts. In this lies its uniqueness, representing its great claim to originality. It has been given a place along with the Upanisads and the Gita, because of its great spiritual influence amongst the Hindus. In fact it forms the main basis of Vaisnavic faith.

The Bhāgavata claims that the ultimate principle of the universe is a spiritual dynamism, which has different grades of expression. This dynamism is concrete in its infinite expressions, but where the principle of expression is not manifestly active, it exhibits itself as a pure existence and consciousness, which is self-luminous. It is as it were the notion which contains the concrete dynamism in itself, but which appears

as abstract and seemingly static. This vision of the reality as quiescence is not the final vision of the spiritual reality. In the dialectical expression, Brahman, the undifferential being and consciousness, represents the initial stage where the dynamic fullness and integrity are not clearly indicated. In spiritual life there is the necessity of such an experience, for it represents the background of the finer development. This experience is a real experience in spiritual life and the Bhāgavata does not demean it, since it occupies a place in life representing the illumined calm as spiritual experience and as offering a transcendence from the incessant dynamism of life on the vital, the mental and the physical planes.

The Bhāgavata feels that unless the background of the whole life is conceived as spiritual, life cannot exhibit its finer growth in spirituality. Hence it begins with the ultimate concept of Brahman as representing the notion behind all existence, which rules out the concepts of a dual hypothesis for the construction and evolution of the world. The Bhāgavata resolves reality to spirit.

But spirit is not undifferentiated existence, spirit is dynamic; hence expression is a necessity. History is really the revelation of spirit through the cosmos.

This revelation may be of two kinds : (i) revelation through nature; (ii) revelation through souls.

The movement of spirit through nature gives us the first concrete expression of spirit. Here it is revealed as controlling and regulating the world of Prakriti—the world of life and mind.

Naturally this beatific vision of the spirit is a finer revelation than the first, for here the vision is clear of God as Power, creative and regulative, and even as a mutative principle through nature; for, in the Bhāgavata nature's dynamism is reflection of the divine dynamism restricted in its application to creative evolution. The Bhāgavata rejects the unconscious purposiveness of evolution of the Samkhya or the self-evolving *clan vital* of Bergson. It accepts that even in creative evolution there is the reflection of spirit, and hence the dynamism of .Maya is somewhat affiliated to the spiritual urge of expression.

Life, mind and nature function, because of the reflection of the supreme spirit on them. Their delight in unfolding and creativeness is the spirit's delight,—their movement appears as unconscious because they have no expression in themselves. If they manifest any meaning, purpose and expression, it is spiritual revelation through nature.

The Bhāgavata recogizes in creation a history of the revelation of spirit through an unconscious material and interprets the evolution of life and nature as ultimately a divine dispensation.

Under the impress of the divine fine integrations are formed through life in society, but the higher and the finer emergence of life through family, society and humanity has not in it complete spirituality, because life in this stage has to overcome the restraint and obstruction of unconscious matter, and, therefore, cannot reveal full spiritual spontaneity and freedom. The finest emergence cannot reflect spirituality, hence suffers in elasticity and transparence. Spirit's expression through nature cannot be complete.

Nature's dynamism, however fine, cannot be so fine as spiritual dynamism, and hence under the impress of spirit, however fine and majestic it may grow, it cannot express itself fully and totally.

Hence spirit has a finer revelation through the world of spirits where the spirit can have its fullest expression. Here revelation is indeed self-expression in beauty, delight and truth.

Spirit is also power, but this aspect is manifested in its relation to nature, but not in relation to the order of spirits; for power is essentially necessary for

creation and adjustment and in the world of pure spirits all is harmony, freedom, elasticity and vivacity.

The conception of power is not possible in the pure world of spirit. The power aspect of the divine is made manifest where there is an obstruction to its will. And obstruction can arise only when there is inconsistency. In the nature of spirit itself, there is movement, but no power and even if power were there, it would require no exhibition, since everything in it is harmony and rhythm. For this, perhaps the Vaisnavas have divorced power from spirit in its inward being, for majesty and power are indeed conceptions relative to cosmic regulation, but not to the inner self-expression of spirit to itself or to the world of spirits.

The spirit, in its self-expression, is love, beauty, consciousness and Ananda. It is consciousness, for it is expressive; it is beauty, for spirit is finely rhythmical in its expression; it is love, for it is ever attractive to the soul. And it is Ananda, for delight is its being.

Spirit is essentially concrete according to the Bhāgavata, and because of its concreteness it exhibits its essence as a supra-person embracing as well as transcending finite souls; for really there is a dynamic identification amongst the spirits themselves. But

dynamic identification does not imply or mean over-shadowing of personality, but rather magnification of personality under the divine influence. Such importing of influence and magnification of being is possible where the nature is responsively elastic and where there is constant transmission of spiritual influence and power.

The speciality of the Bhāgavata lies in emphasizing the concreteness of the divine. The finite souls are also concrete; but the divine is the highest concrete reality, since it integrates in itself the total existence. The uniqueness of the divine lies in enfolding the whole existence as well as in transcending it.

The divine is concrete because it is spiritual. To be spiritual is to be concrete. But this concreteness reaches its fullness in the conception of Bhagawān, where the dialectic unity reveals its full nature. In this unity is synthesized the nature of the divine as indeterminate being and as creative and regulative power. The second conception is richer in the sense that it introduces some form of concreteness in the divine in the place of an indeterminate luminous existence. Dynamism introduces concreteness in the divine, wherein the dynamism is not only creative, but also expressive, and a new conception of the dynamism

presents itself. It really shows the character of the divine to be essentially spirit.

Spirit has essentially two movements—a movement through nature and a movement through finite souls. Its finer nature is revealed in movements through souls, for here it can reveal its lustrous being and ineffable delight—and hence it can present its inward nature more fully. Nature reflects spirit as acting (in Gentile's expression), but the federation of souls reflects spirit as expressive delight.

The Bhāgavata has not broken away from the general tendency of Indian thought, its emphasis upon spiritual transcendence. Though it claims that Reality is concrete, still it holds that the concreteness has a transcendental aspect, where its true nature is revealed. If reality in its immanence can express its nature as the cosmic mind, in its transcendence it expresses itself as the supramental existence with the triune expression of sat, chit and ananda.* The expression of the divine in immanence cannot be the same with its supernal expression of consciousness and delight.

Life, and especially spiritual life, may be concrete, but its concreteness does not suppose that it is a self-expressing act through nature and society; it has this movement, but it has a finer and

truer movement in itself, without any touch with life expressed in cosmic urges. Such movements are spiritual and real *per se*. And here the concreteness of reality is fully expressed, because its integral reality is presented.

This height of transcendence is the true objective of the spiritual life, for philosophy cannot be satisfied with anything less than a concrete realization of the supreme reality. And in this concrete realization the seeking soul must feel that behind the urges of life there is the finer divine urge, mostly revealing before us the wealth of the divine attributes and the lustre of its effulgence. This gives us a synthetic insight as well as an uplifting force enabling us to enjoy the finest expression in Saccidananda.

But even in this height of existence there is a spiritual relativity of expression and reception, of dedication and acceptance. The Bhāgavata does not lay so much emphasis upon spiritual calm as it does upon spiritual dynamism and it conceives always a play in spiritual attraction and in spiritual repulsion. Since spirit is dynamic, it cannot cease to attract and repel, and thus to express itself in a concrete play of life, be it in transcendence or in immanence. In the former, there is not the least tension, it is all life,

music and harmony; in the latter it is life and death, tension and relaxation, harmony and discord.

The ease and the felicity of the cosmic life are disturbed at times, for the forces that work in it are of dual natures, spirit and matter; and hence the necessity arises to go beyond the cosmic expression of life and to seek the urge that really helps to spiritualize our nature and being. This urge can be felt with the uprearing of a transcendental attitude of life and by complete opening of our psychic being to its influence. Happily, in the divine there is a constant tendency to relate itself to the finite spirits, for, rightly understood, the dynamic conception of the divine introduces an integration of the finite spirits with the divine. The divine life is movement and free play, which mean an outer sending forth and an inner reception. There is no cessation of this process. But the spiritual life which the finite spirits seek is essentially an indrawn movement which seeks the contact of the Triune expression of the divine, for the divine in its transcendental transparence is Ananda, and consciousness. But in the inmost essence of its being it is Ananda more than anything else and this Ananda is always associated with illumination. It is illumined Ananda. The Bhāgavat lays more emphasis upon the bliss

aspect of the divine, for here its intrepidity, radiance, aroma and ineffability have greater manifestation than in luminous expression, which is serene, sedate, tranquil and calm. Ananda has the greatest attraction for the finite spirits, for they in it can enjoy its finest and truest nature. This mutual attraction in Ananda is Love.

This revelation of the divine in love is the finest, for love is the essence of being, the spiritual order is an order in free play and spontaneous expression in love. Life here has its finest rhythm and the greatest expression.

Will and power are associated with the divine as creator and regulator. No doubt the Bhāgavata school accepts a finer evolution of the soul through the absorption of powers and the fineness of will by dynamic identification, but this is not, according to it, the finest consummation (Ahamgraha-upasana). The dynamic identification may allow us the finer privileges of exercising cosmic powers, but it cannot exhibit the finest in divine life in transcendence. Love in this sense is the finest expression of the divine. The expression of the spirit in cosmic will and unrestrained power is far below the expression of the spirit as Love.

The cosmic will has in it an externality which Love rejects.

Since Love is an attraction it has play. The play of the divine Will is manifested in its cosmic expression, the play of Love is exhibited in his supra-mental being.

This play of love is unceasing. In this play there is the constant tendency to identification and the contrary tendency to separation. The centric urge in the finite spirit touches and enjoys the divine, but this tendency is succeeded by a contrary eccentric tendency. These two tendencies make the life a constant play in bliss, in which the divine and the human are simultaneously on the point of identification and separation. This identification in love is so rich a spiritual promise that the identificaton in powers falls into shade before it. The spiritual life may be so fine that it may reflect the divine powers, and gradually come to feel the akinness and the union with the divine. And the being may be so transparent and receptive that it may reflect the divine life directly; but these are possibilities in the cosmic expression of the divine life. The constant flowering of the divine life through the anxious yearning of the aspirant may stop with the intuitions of the divine in the cosmic play and the soul may

remain with these possibilities and formations. Indeed these are great privileges, for they make us acquainted with the life of the spirit through nature in its creative formation, but unless the aspiration be still finer the rich harvest of the life in love cannot be realized. Spirit is power in self-alienation; spirit is love in integration.

The Bhāgavata recognizes the three paths of spiritual discipline and fruition; the path of knowledge, the path of Yoga and the path of devotion, corresponding to the three conceptions of the divine as Pure consciousness, the divine as dynamism in power and the divine as dynamism in love. These three paths are presented for men with different psychic formations and attitudes.

The path of knowledge is prescribed for the aspirant for the seemingly calm in the divine life, which frees us from the life of insistences and instincts. In it there is no attempt to educate them, but to deny them as something purely natural, not belonging to the soul. Such aspirants could not see the divine ingress in nature and always keep up the division between the divine and the natural. And the dynamic divine to them is more a reflection than reality. Hence their seeking has been the complete transcendence from the

life of the divine in society or in nature. They are anxious to transcend history completely and pass into Silence.

The Bhāgavat does not ascribe a very high place to such aspirants; but the importance of this path has been recognized as a definite tendency to abstract spirituality. This may be an imperfect expression of spirituality, but it is an expression. This may be called subjective spirituality with its emphasis upon abstract transcendence.

Subjective spirituality cannot rise to the apprehension of the spiritual meaning of creative life, nor can it find the beauties of synthetic life. Hence the Bhāgavata considers it as the initial stage in spiritual life. The next step in spirituality comes in with the perfect realization of the creative life of spirit through nature. If the former path gives us a complete forsaking of nature, this path gives us a true education in nature and the regulation of it, and enables manifestation of her finer forces. This is the path of knowledge and power. Knowledge gives the secrets of nature and power utilizes them to our advantage. The seeker on this path becomes attracted to the divine powers and gradually seeks to assimilate them to the effective control of nature. But power is not the only thing

sought; Power comes with knowledge. The divine wisdom reveals finally the possibility of souls growing in affinity with the divine in being, wisdom and power. Their psychic luminosity can reflect the divine nature easily. Hence they exhibit fine elasticity and ease and free movement in their being. They even can suspend nature's powers and reveal supra-abundant power in the direction of will. At times they may be possessed of divine power because of the fineness of their being. Nature is no longer a terror to them, no longer a barrier, for they have the finest exhibition of nature in them. This Yoga or discipline may be called objective, since it acquaints the soul with the divine manifested through nature and nature's powers.

Then comes the synthetic spirituality. The objective vision traces spirituality through nature and God reflected in the mirror of nature. It presents a synthesis of nature and spirit, but it cannot rise to the appreciation of the complete synthesis of the subjective and the objective in transcendent spirit. The expression of the spirit in nature meets restraint, but this expression in self meets no restraints; there the spirit is exhibited in its finer supra-mundane and supra-cosmic dynamism.

This supramental expression oversteps the cosmic

expression. This expression is really the expression of the spirit to self and to the finite spirits free from earthly ties and tendencies. The divine life is presented here in its full synthesis, in its superb beauty, captivating sweetness and enchanting harmony. Life here is extremely graceful, vividly fresh.

The force of synthetic spirituality can be felt with the opening of our being in finer devotion and receptive and responsive surrender. This brings out a psychic transparence and spiritual susceptibilities deeply involved in our nature.

This kind of discipline consists in nothing but immediately putting us in the proper responsive and receptive attitude with the highest aspiration of the soul to catch the influence of the dynamic divine as expressed in itself. To this spiritual aspiration the divine immediately responds. This response is grace, not for redemption but for impressing the finest harmony and for pouring in the finest sweetness of the Divine. The Bhāgavata considers such spirituality as the highest divine expression and possibility. It is called the synthetic spirituality because life in its finest urges is presented here in knowledge, in beauty, in grace. And this spirituality is not confined to merely a single monotonous expression. It is expressed in

infinite varieties. The soul has the complete feast and festivity of delight, rich in harmony, beauteous in expression, and potent in charm. Life moves here in responsive reactions to the unceasing expressions of the divine life. The Bhāgavata impresses upon grace for an access into the transcendental divinity.

The soul may have the finest fitness in being, and in purity; but grace is the indrawing power that alone can admit the seeking soul into the kingdom of Righteousness and seal the union of souls in spiritual marriage. The bride of the soul must be patiently waiting before the divine bridegroom can visit her—but the light of faith should be ever burning in her to welcome the divine consort in her heart of hearts, and to be united with Him in His consoling and all-absorbing embrace.

Love finds expression not only in the form of a divine bride; it also finds expression in the form of a divine mother in the expectant attitude of service to the divine son, in the form of a divine friend and a divine attendant.

These are all attitudes of the transcendent love. The divine life has all the shades of love that are met with here, for human love is the restricted reflection of the divine.

The Bhāgavata also conceives divine descent. This descent may be in power, love and knowledge. The former has cosmic purpose necessary for cosmic transfiguration, the latter for revealing divine love and wisdom. This descent may be indirect through inspired agents or direct through incarnations. The former are supermen, the latter divine men. The incarnations are God in flesh. These incarnations, again, may be to express divine Power, or divine Love.

Power does not exhibit the finest in the Divine, but love does. Power is necessary for cosmic adjustment, love for establishing spiritual federation. Love alone can attract the earth towards heaven and integrate humanity and divinity in indissoluble union. The incarnations can establish cycles of civilization in power, dignity, wisdom and spirituality. Rare are the visitations from the Divine, for in civilization the time must be ripe for an incarnation. And incarnations depend upon the psychic forces that unconsciously but surely regulate the building and the transforming forces of life. The spiritual kingdom on earth can only be established when the forces are responsive to the finest urges of life; when the time forces are ripe, the divine in its beauty, with all its wealth of powers and love, can intervene in the cosmic regulation. The truth is

revealed that at the back of civilization works unseen the Power that controls and destroys the dark forces and the Love that cements humanity into a divine federation on earth.

IV

DYNAMIC SPIRITUALITY OF THE TANTRAS

Next to the Vedas in their hoariness, spiritual and cultural importance stand the Tantras. It would not be too strong to say that for long after Buddhistic times the Tantras held their own as the finest spiritual discipline. Even in the monasteries established by Samkara one can see the influence of Tantric discipline; and even at this day, it can be asserted without hesitation that the Tantras form the main background of spiritual culture amongst the Hindus. The Vedic culture, especially in its rituals and the practical application of them in life, is fast disappearing, though the finest expression of it in the Upanisads still holds its own.

The Tantras form a vast literature touching upon philosophy, metaphysics, psychology, biology, psychophysics, self-hypnotism, medicine, clairvoyance, symbology—in fact everything that has some importance to life. In this way they form an Encyclopædia of knowledge.

The Tantras do not indulge in speculative theories, but, a speculative philosophy can be developed out of them. The Tantras give us conclusions which can be formulated into fine metaphysics; but what they valued most is the one that will naturally manifest in the process of self-opening, and not that one which can be built up by logicism. In fact, the fundamental tendency of Hinduism that Truth is more to be realized in life finds clear expression in the Tantras.

They have, therefore, uniqueness. They give the complete *art* of life. The unfolding of life requires adaptation, biological, psychological, ethical and metaphysical. Hence the study of all the sciences enters into the Tantras from their pragmatic *usefulness*, for the complete Truth and life in its finest flowering cannot be enjoyed unless all the forces, natural and spiritual, can be controlled and applied to the unfolding of life in its increasing fineness. The Tantras in this sense represent the full code of life.

It will not be possible to deal with all the aspects of the Tantras in this short paper. We shall confine ourselves to the dynamic spiritualism of the Tantras as the most potent of their teachings.

It should be stated at the outset that the philoso-

phical conclusions of the Tantras have not been much different from the fundamental Upanisadic Truth—Tattvamasi, the realization of the oneness of being. There are indeed the Tantras of different schools, which may not differ from this philosophical consummation, though they put a stress upon the non-difference of the Siva and the Sakti, and the co-inherence of the dynamic principle in the Transcendent Siva. To this conclusion allegiance is not shown by all the Tantra teachers, *e.g.*, the author of the *Kularnava,* who maintains the final beatitude to be the complete transcendence beyond all philosophical concepts of dualism and non-dualism.

Whatever it may be from the philosophical viewpoint, in life this aspect is not of fundamental importance. As an art of life the Tantras are more concerned with the methods of unfolding, and as such they emphasize the dynamic discipline which can manifest the fine receptivities and spiritual susceptibilities and possibilities. The Tantras are very practical and therefore can be characterized as the spiritual science which finds out the path of realization.

The Tantras accept from the Upanisads the doctrine of correspondence between the psychic and the cosmic forces and make practical application of it

in life. But the ideal seeking does not much differ from the Upanisads. And this is to attain the Siva-hood, the transcendence of self and to escape from its Pasuhood (finitude) which is the state of bondage.

The Tantras apparently lay emphasis upon the dynamic principle, Sakti, which is integrally associated with Siva. But Siva transcends Sakti. Sakti is the moving principle, and Siva is the calm. There is an ideal unfolding through the contradiction inherent in the dynamism, but Siva transcends the ideal unfolding and the stress of Sakti.

The Tantras present different conceptions of Siva. Sometimes stress has been laid down upon its transcendence. It has been accepted as the only truth beyond *is* and *is not*. And sometimes Siva is represented as the primal background, but in integral association with Sakti. Sakti is immanent in Siva; Sakti is the force of projection in creation and the force of withdrawal in liberation.

Sakti is in equilibrium in one stage, it is active on the point of creative manifestation in the other. Siva is the locus of Sakti, a locus that is not in the least affected by the play of Sakti, either in the cosmic unfolding or in the cosmic closing. Siva is transcendent and remains indifferent to the process either

of unfolding or of closing. This indifference speaks of its transcendence. And to realize this Transcendence is the goal of life. Siva in this sense does not in the least differ from Brahman in the Upanisads.

But there is another conception of Siva. It is actively associated with Sakti, and the reality is conceived as Siva-Sakti. This conception makes prominent the personal natures both of Siva and of Sakti and corresponds to the conception of Isvara and Maya in the Upanisads. Siva-Sakti corresponds to the western conception of Being-becoming. The Tantras emphasize the principle of becoming, but unlike Bergson they insist upon the locus of becoming to a centre and a point. Becoming is ideal unfolding of the divine, but behind this ideal unfolding stands Siva, the supreme consciousness which energizes this ideal unfolding.

This conception of Siva makes it personal, for it is viewed in a reference. But in reality Siva is impersonal and transcendent, for in it no centralization is formed. Siva in relation to Sakti has centralization. It appears as personal.

The Tantras, with the Vedanta, retain the metaphysical and the theological conception of *Siva*. Metaphysically it is transcendent. Theologically it is

principle individuating and manifesting itself through the instrumentality of Sakti.

In this process of dynamic expression, with the concrete transfigurations of Sakti, Siva manifests its concrete nature, for the concrete formations of Sakti are associated with it. Sakti has no isolated and independent existence. The transformation of the one causes the other to appear as concrete. But this form of Sakala Siva has a special importance in the Tantras as indicating a definite phase of realization which the adept reaches before a final plunge into transcendence.

Here is the great difference between the Tantras and the Vedanta. In the Vedanta Isvara is represented as the super-subject which reflects the whole existence, which is not very important in the life of spiritual illumination. The Vedanta lays great emphasis on discrimination and philosophic reflection which ultimately presents the truth of Identity. As a method of discipline Vedanta is more intellectual. Isvara is accepted as the moral and spiritual guide with the power to enlighten us, but the final illumination is to come through the philosophic discrimination which sees the illusoriness of the phantom of appearances and the reality of the Absolute, which is Self. The main effort of the Vedanta in spiritual life has been not

the psychological opening, but fine understanding, which enables us to transcend the ordinary habits of thought and psychical penetration and at once puts us on a plane whence disappear the limitations of relative life and thinking. The conception of the divine is not, therefore, a great conception which can be metaphysically important and spiritually effective. For it really does not offer help in the realization of Truth.

The Vedanta rejects any other approach than the intellectual, which in the end rears up fine intellectual intuition giving us the truth of Tattvamasi.

The Tantras differ from the Vedanta in insisting on the psychological opening of our whole nature and being. Its method is essentially psychological and not logical or metaphysical. It is more practical and experimental, and in this it is bold, for it leaves aside all intellectual subtleties and insists on the release of the forces of life. In this lies its appeal.

The influence of Siva as Sakala must be felt, its conception fully understood, before one can gain access into luminous Siva. In the Vedanta, the approach has been logical, metaphysical and intuitive. And the theological attitude has been almost forsaken in the beginning. Isvara has, therefore, not so

prominent a place in the Vedanta as the Sakala Siva in the Tantras.

The Tantras open all the psychic and the spiritual forces and find their economies in the setting of life as well as transcending them in the final and complete illumination.

The Tantras present the full dynamism of human nature to transcend it finally. Dr. Winternitz is mistaken in calling the Tantras the sacred books of the Saktas. In fact, the Tantrikas do not represent any particular sect; for the Tantras are really disciplines, scientific, theological and metaphysical in their application to life. The Tantras form the background of spiritual culture; and all the spiritual sects in India, Saivas, Saktas, Vaisnavas, Ganapatyas draw their inspiration and discipline from the Tantras.

Siva-Sakti has obtained prominence in the Tantras, for the path is the path of unfolding all the forces involved in life and of realizing the finest spiritual dynamism playing through life. Sakti is the source of all possibilities, spiritual, psychic, vital, both cosmic and individual. Siva is beyond all actuality and possibility. Before one can realize Niskala Siva, one has to pass through the finer stages of revelation that take place when the cosmic dynamism becomes

active in us. In fact, with the infusion of the Sakti into our being, the supramental realizations take place and the finer stretches of life begin to open before our spiritual horizon. We pass from the mental to the supramental, from the individual to the cosmic life; and it has its use, for it really gives us wider life, subtler delight and more elastic being. Such experience and unfolding give us distant glimpses of the life that is still to be unfolded.

Dynamic inspiration and dynamic opening introduce us into a world far beyond our imagination and conception. It introduces us into the finer world of dynamical ideals and ideas. The finer aspect of creation is revealed. It may not be the finest spiritual experience, but it allows us to enjoy the elasticity of spiritual life.

In the Vedanta, Sakti has been placed in the background, in the Tantras, in the foreground. In this the Tantras anticipate Schopenhauer, but while in Schopenhauer there is no super-conscious background of will, in the Tantras there is. The world is the objectification of will in both, but while Schopenhauer in this objectification sees the spontaneous play of an inconscient will, the Tantras read into it the play of a super-conscious will. The creative will expresses

itself in ideas, and ideas are forms of will rising into definite consciousness. The transcendent will is luminous and supra-conscious. In the Tantras will has a spontaneous play and expression, but nowhere has this will been conceived as non-conscious.

Schopenhauer could not perceive the reality of transcendent consciousness, and hence what is beyond relational consciousness is to him unique, transcendental; but it cannot be characterized as luminous. Schopenhauer fails to see the pure conscious nature of transcendent will.

Though the Tantras emphasize this luminosity of Transcendent will, still they do not make it personal, for such a will is never associated with a personal background. Will is an impersonal agency that plays behind a luminous background or consciousness. It transcends all relative knowledge and experience; It is super-conscious force which gradually takes forms or condenses itself into stress or dynamic centres or points, but in itself it has no form, but only expression. This impersonal, transcendent but conscious nature of will is what the Tantras emphasize. The transcendent will is integrally associated with the transcendent consciousness, and they have play in the cosmic and supra-cosmic expression. But beyond this play is

the Niskala or Para-Siva, the supreme *Puissance* of Existence beyond the supra-cosmic and the cosmic play of the transcendent will.

The transcendent will is the supreme force beyond life, but it has two stages—a stage of equilibrium and a stage of dynamic instability. In the supreme Siva it is in equilibrium, it has no impulsion, and, therefore, the cosmic play is temporarily suspended.

Evolution begins with the dynamic instability of the cosmic energy, when all the forces are ripe for a new history and a new orientation of life.

Generally there are three ways in which the Sakti manifests herself; (i) as creative force; (ii) as preservative force; and (iii) as withdrawing force. In these three forms of manifestations it is called Brāhmi or Saraswati, Lakshmi and Sivāni. The creative oscillation from the finer into the gross stage is indicated in the former, for really creation is a descent from the subtle character and form of Sakti to its gross nature. It is the process of distribution, condensation and concentration. The Tantras differ from the Emergent Evolutionists in proceeding from the finer to the gross. The finer cannot emerge from the gross, rather the gross is the finer restrained in its complete

expression. Evolution is really a descent, it is downward movement. This downward movement exhibits many forms emerging in the course of evolution, but the formal expression of them indicates the diversities of creation, but not necessarily their permanent nature. Sakti alone is permanent and none other; The more the forms can shake off their grossness and inertia the more they can exhibit their free nature and creativeness, for creativeness cannot quite manifest itself only because of inertia which in many cases overcomes it.

Life and mind are, according to the Tantras, the finer manifestation of the creative energy, but not of crude matter—for matter indeed is the arrest of energy and suspension of its creative force, because of the dominance of inertia. But life and mind are not to be conceived as the higher stages in the evolutionary chain, because they are also dissolved in the primal background. They may grow fine because of the elimination of inertia inherent in their nature, but they are not to be conceived as eternally enduring, for they may ultimately disappear into the primal cause. Evolution may pass into finer emergence, but these emergents are not to be conceived as belonging to higher degrees or grades of reality. They represent,

no doubt, some finer integration and expression of the creative energy, but that does not make them in any way qualitatively different from the rest of the evolutes. Mind, life and matter are all expressions of the same creative energy; their difference is due to the setting and proportional dominance of the original elements of that energy.

This point brings us to an interesting topic, *viz.* the conception of matter. Bergson conceives matter as the progress of the *elan vital* checked or arrested. Matter is to him the process inverted, more properly it is the process of evolution suspended. Bergson hits the truth, no doubt, but he cannot explain it; for the author of the creative evolution does not recognize any other formative element than *elan vital*, and indeed for him matter can only be the progress of the vital suspended or inverted. In the Hindu Cosmology Matter is indeed Energy checked in its creative flow because of the dominance of Tamas; if anyhow this can be stopped, Matter will cease to exist. It will be all luminous and all life, though it will not lose its equilibrium. Ultimately by the principle of redistribution the whole setting of life can be changed, and the crudeness and the inertia which stop the free expression of life and delight can be overcome and life may

show emergence into finer expressions: into the luminous expression of Sattva, and the delightful vibration of Rajas, together with the calm equilibrium of Tamas.

The emergence of life and mind is due to the finer functioning of the creative energy. Matter is restrained activity, life is restrained expression, and mind is luminous expression.

But whatever it is, the finest emergence of life in its phases of beauty is the working out of the creative energy. And hence any expression of life, however fine, cannot surmount it. There is, therefore, a movement of withdrawal, back into the source, in which the creative integrations, however fine, again dissolve into their causes and the creative energy passes into the state of equilibrium in the Siva. The creative energy exhibits then the contrary tendency of withdrawing the whole evolution into itself and passing into the calm. This tendency accounts for the cosmic involution.

But besides all these original tendencies of the Primal energy which evolves and regulates the cosmic stream of life, there is another which reveals the other phase of the Primal energy, *i.e.*, the centripetal movement for the liberation of souls. This is a third move-

ment besides the two original ones in the centric movement in destruction, and the eccentric movement in creation. It is truly centric, because it is not followed by an eccentric urge. This centric urge follows the dynamic inspiration in man to outgrow his present status and nature and to realize either the finer evolution of psychic powers and forces or else the complete release.

The Tantras lay great emphasis upon discovering the helpful light that is being always thrown on the path of the seekers after spiritual unfolding and realization. This is generally called grace. This is the law of gravitation in spiritual life, for if life exhibits tendencies to create and evolve it has a finer tendency in itself to reassert its truer nature in spirit and to be widely self-conscious in spirit. It feels discord and a bondage in its descent and its play through the world of forms, and is anxious to enjoy the freedom of spirit. And there is in us a sense of an infinite expanse of life. Life has this spontaneous indication in it. Whenever the psychic being becomes free from the attractions of life it reveals this silent seeking.

This silent seeking is, therefore, an indication of the uplifting force in life. This uplifting force manifests another phase of the divine Sakti. Its

character as redemptive force exhibits powers which are not usually manifested. This aspect of its character is accessible to the finer souls who are yearning after ineffable light and divine Ananda. It cannot reveal itself where the eccentric urge of life is dominant. It cannot, for it is the finer movement of life pre-eminent above all the dynamic aspiration which can ascend from the purity and fineness of being. This redeeming nature of the divine Sakti presents it in a character different from her cosmic manifestations and cosmic movements. These are movements in ignorance, but the redeeming movement is movement in light and spirituality. The cosmic movements of Sakti are plays in ignorance because it hides her nature as the saviour of the seeking souls, and her transcendent transfigurations. The dynamic divine reveals the finer values of Beauty, Holiness and Delight. It reveals also the saving forces that are silently active in life. These forces are helpers on the path of light. They take charge of the yearning souls and finally release them. The main functions of this uplifting and elevating force are to manifest its pure psychic nature and to reveal all the psychic forces that generate the constitution of man.

These forces are in direct touch with the dynamic divine, and unless these psychic forces be in harmony with the dynamic aspiration, difficulties are experienced in the way of attaining the final identification with the dynamic divine. But, happily, if the aspiration is keen, there can arise no obstruction from our psychic being, for joy of the psychic being lies also in spirit, and therefore if the aspiration arises from the centric being, the fruition and realization becomes immediate.

Where the psychic nature offers obstruction, the realization does not become so easy. Hence the Tantras recognize three paths prescribing different forms of discipline in reference to the nature and the constitution of our psychic being. The finest path of Divya-ācāra is possible for souls with finer evolution at the back and with a transparent psychic being. Such souls can at times intuit immediately the functioning of the dynamic divine in life. The pure psychic nature reflects fine spirituality, and naturally the discipline for purification is not necessary in his case. He is, by nature, fit for the highest life in divine wisdom.

But where psychic impurity creates obstruction, naturally the psychic forces need purification, regulation and harmonization. Here, again, we have two paths—the one is the crudest for the lowest type, the

other is for the souls who have a natural control but whose being is not as yet perfectly divinized. The former are called *Pashus*, the latter, *Viras*. *Pashus* are the ordinary souls, where the evolution is not fine and life's chords do not vibrate because of the dominance of Tamas. *Viras* are powerful souls with a being vibrative dominantly in Rajas, hence naturally they can expect to be finer Sadhakas with a control over their nature. They are called Viras because of the natural resistance they put forth to the lower vital being. The Tantras extol the Viras, for they can boldly proceed in the way and can turn their power, culture and psychic training—even nature's obstructive forces—to their advantage. But the Divya-Sādhaka is so fine in his being, that he has to overcome no opposition, for he, by his luminous being and purity, silences all opposition. Nature, which exhibits her finest self before such souls, becomes fully spiritualized in him. Hence such souls have naturally an inwardness and psychic purity that can keep all resistance and opposition at a distance.

The Divya-Sādhaka has so fine a being that it can be instrumental to the play of the divine Sakti. The Vira-Sādhakas exhibit superior vitality and mental purification, and hence they can overcome all opposi-

tion from nature. But the Divya-Sādhaka transforms his being in such a way as can reflect Svattvic luminosity through being. This divine transparence is his highest possession and makes him a fit transmitter of divine powers.

The Tantras accept the spiritual ideal as final release and liberation; for they recognize Sivahood in lustrous wisdom and ineffable Ananda as the highest consummation of life. And this liberation is in the gift of the dynamic divine, for the divine can bestow all gifts, earthly and heavenly, and can even help the soul to end the Life's journey by offering Transcendental wisdom. And this it does by helping psychic opening in its finer form, where nothing is left besides the supreme Puissance of an unfettered and free existence beyond the bounds of space and the stream of time.

But even in this consummation there is a difference. Some souls pass into the orbs of light and do not return, and even if they return they remain silent to work out their Karma in previous lives. They move on earth mostly indifferently and as if absorbed in thought.

But there may be a type which is so fit in its psychic nature and commands so much dynamic spirituality that it becomes the fit instrument of the dynamic

divine for its purpose on earth. Their psychic being is so transparent that it can be immediately receptive to the finer dynamic currents. Such souls maintain two attitudes—an attitude of Siva, luminous silence, and an attitude of Sakti, manifesting powers, controlling and regulating the cosmic life.

In fact, such souls are almost akin to Isvara, but not Isvara, for a multiplicity of Isvaras is not possible, but their nature has become so fine that they can feel and see the ingress of the dynamic divine in them and its expression through them. They become conversant with what may be called dynamic spirituality. The initial ascent of the soul is due to the spiritual yearning, but when the yearning gains a ready response from the dynamic divine, it purifies and cleanses the psychic and the vital-setting and infuses it by its inflow. The dynamic spirituality draws from the divine power and exhibits it in life. The complete identification may not be easily accomplished, but even the partial identification makes the centres full of light, power and Ananda.

A distinction can be drawn between Transcendent spirituality and Dynamic spirituality. The one is not possible without the other; but the one is not the other. Transcendent spirituality presupposes complete

freedom from the working and the functioning of our vital-mental being and the final and total withdrawal of our being from all the aspects of life to enjoy the Poise in luminous silence. It is everything that concrete life is not. It is, in one word, the forsaking of life and its movements in the all-absorbing silence.

Dynamic spirituality, on the other hand, presupposes close touch with the informant silence but it implies more. It saturates our being with the movements of the dynamic divine in its cosmic and supracosmic expression and even in its activity in our psychic life and opening.

Dynamic spirituality, therefore, reveals to us the secrets of the dynamic divine, in its irresistible power, in its absorbing beauties, in its joyful movements, and in its ever fresh and ever creative life. Nay, the dynamic spirituality allows us the privilege of enjoying, not as a distant observer, but as an intimate partaker of these spiritual privileges and genial currents of the soul. It suffuses our being with its spirit.

Dynamic spirituality recognizes the importance of the Transcendental will and seeks an affiliation of our will to it. With this affiliation will is redeemed from its inertia and partialities and can feel its identification with the divine will. This identification makes it

effective, powerful as an agent of divine life and expression. The Tantras do not regard Prakriti as a constant barrier to the expression of the supramental life; Prakriti can be a fine instrument of the divine expression. And this can be done when nature is transformed under the pressure of supramental will.

When will finds the plastic Prakriti its instrument, it can express itself better. Indeed it can throw out the vast wisdom, the fine transparent nature with the rejection of grossness which is a barrier to the expression of fine and blessed life. With the emergence of such a life the constant conflict between nature and spirit vanishes and nature, to a certain extent, is denaturalized, for in evolution its stress is to attain a state where it can realize luminosity and mobility, and can reflect the transcendent wisdom and will. Evolution has not reached its height. And its finest phase can reveal when nature completely surrenders herself to spirit, removes its obstructions and assertions, and finds constant joy in being completely passive, receptive and instrumental to the ingress of spirit.

Closely associated with the Bhāvas, stages of spirituality, are connected forms of discipline, called Acāras. These disciplines are Vedic, Vaisnavic, Shaiva, Dakshinā, Vāmā, Siddhānta and Kaul.

These are stages of the spiritual evolution. The last is the final stage of complete spiritual illumination. The first stage gives us vital and mental purity, the second, devotion and spiritual fineness, the third, knowledge, the fourth, consolidation, the fifth, spontaneous renunciation, the sixth, the supreme conviction of the superiority of the renunciation to enjoyment, the last, final conscious illumination.

The first three of the seven Bhāvas are true of the Sādhakas in the lowest rung of the ladder, the next two belong to Vira-Sādhaka and the last two to Divya-Sādhaka.

The Tantras offer unique discipline to wake up the finer dynamism of spirit. It moves the vital and the spiritual energies and transform the vital nature by spiritual infusion. But this transformation is gradual, the blind seeking of the vital nature including vital obscurities is slowly eliminated, not by suppression, but by exposing the nature and the constitution of our vital being. The Tantras localize our vital, mental and psychic functions to the different centres of our organism and offer a clear psychic analysis of the forces working in man. The secret of its discipline is to keep the vital being in equilibrium, for in spiritual life, the greatest disturbance comes from this direction. Without vital

equilibrium, spirit cannot have its free play. The vital strength is no index of spiritual strength; where the vital seeking is great, it is difficult to make the spiritual forces active unless there is a transparent vital being ready to be controlled and regulated by spirit.

The Tantras have freely allowed satisfaction to all the parts of our being, in order that all the movements of life should manifest its true nature. By experience life's movement would gradually seek genial currents and delights of the soul. In spiritual life a conflict is experienced between the vital and the spiritual forces, between the vital and the spiritual satisfaction.

Generally, the vital forces are suppressed in order that the spiritual forces can have free play. But the Tantras have allowed the free play of all the forces, with an emphasis upon selecting the spiritual from amongst them. The speciality of the Tantras lies, therefore, in putting into vigorous activity all the forces, and at the same time insisting upon discrimination, discernment and detachment. The Tantric discipline removes vital obstructions in many aspirant souls by allowing gratification and at the same time insisting upon holding steadfastly to the ideal, and in bright souls by automatically affiliating the vital movements to

spiritual urges. In the latter case, the vital cannot cause obstruction because of the transparent and luminous psychic being. The vital being enjoys the rhythm of spiritual life and gains its satisfaction therefrom. In Divya-ācāra, the vital is transformed by the impress of the psychic upon the vital, in Vira-ācāra, the vital is allowed a free play with the aspiration for the infusion of the psychic force. This aspiration makes the psychic active for the transformation of the vital. In the one the transformation is direct, inasmuch as the vital is luminous and transparent to catch the influence of the psychic; in the other the vital is strong and full of insistences for gratification and naturally it takes time for the infusion of the psychic into the vital.

V

REALITY

In determining the nature of reality the Indian Mind has not subordinated the claims of intuition and revelation to the claims of reason. Reason it has appealed to, but reason has not alone been considered sufficient in giving the final conclusion. The services of intuition are not new in philosophy; but, in laying emphasis upon Intuition, it is thought that reason, whatever it may tell us about Reality, cannot penetrate into it. Philosophy must not remain satisfied with coherent and cogent thinking, but must at least present to us the face of Truth. This claim reason cannot make, and Philosophy with the help of reason can give us a structure of thought, but reality still remains quite foreign to it. It can touch the fringe.

The construction of reason may have supreme value, but how could Philosophy forego the direct visitation of Truth by a faculty whose eminence is no less important than reason? Professor Whitehead remarks that intuition "is a private psychological habit and is without general evidential force". Again, "intuition is a function of rare and exceptional moments".

Intuition is not a private habit, and even if it were so, could Philosophy neglect the superhuman revelations of religion and life in the construction of its claims? How can reason neglect experience in its construction? Reason claims to formulate Truth by removing contradictions and asserting self-consistency. That alone is reason's claim. But if consistency can be accepted in the formulation of Truth, why should intuition be ignored, especially in view of the fact that intuition claims to give immediate awareness?

Somewhere even in Philosophy the evidential character of propositions must stop and point to their self-evidence and self-consistency. If self-consistency is the highest criterion of Truth, self-evidence and immediate awareness should indeed be welcome as exhibiting the inwardness of Truth. The criteria of Truth are self-consistency, which reason finds out, and self-awareness, which intuition reveals.

Indian Philosophy, especially the Vedanta, emphasizes this immediate awareness as higher than, but not necessarily in conflict with, the claims of reason. Reason, of course, cannot formulate judgments in conformity with intuition, but the finest rational construction must ultimately be in harmony with intuition. So long as this conformity is not attained,

the Indian teachers do not accept the affirmations of reason.

In doing this, the critical nature of reason has not been sacrificed, but emphasis has been given to the necessity of Reason to formulate its judgments according to finer intuitions. Thought cannot deny experiences and intuitions, though thought can assimilate them in its own being to formulate any scheme. Philosophy is never committed to integrate all experiences; and if experiences are offered which cannot be integrated with the rest, philosophy cannot certainly reject them. Because an intuition is of course a rare experience, it cannot, on that sole ground, be brushed aside; on the contrary, rare intuitions should command respect, because of their uniqueness and novelty.

Philosophy must be ready to adapt itself according to the new revelations, not only in positive science, but also in psychic science, for they reveal facts which are actual to some, but possible to all. And because our experience is fixed to certain patterns, we should not necessarily be irresponsive to the unusual experiences of private movements. Such rigidity of mind is not helpful to philosophy, inasmuch as it is determined to reject unique experiences, because

of their uniqueness. The Indian mind has given emphasis to such experiences, as they introduce us into a world beyond our finger-tips. This openness of Indian mind has not denied all distinction between Philosophy and Mysticism; it has retained to Philosophy its rational construction, not by neglecting the finer intuition, but by reading the light it throws upon it.

Mysticism is a distinct subject. It transcends philosophy in its immediate object. Philosophy may pass into it, but philosophy is not mysticism; though philosophy emphasizes the discipline, both intellectual, moral and spiritual, that may ultimately give the finest vision and experience.

Philosophy builds up by observing and accepting the full facts of life. This appeal to experience has been evidenced when the Indian philosophy in building up its system takes into consideration not only the waking experiences, but also the experiences of dream-sleep, sleep and samadhi (ecstatic experiences).

The formulation of Philosophy on the evidence of mere experience really ignores the deeper side of our psychic nature. And knowledge wrought upon such experience alone is indeed a poor philosophy. However epistomological fineness is shown in our

construction, its whole character may be changed if we extend our experience to all its phases. A philosophical formulation without taking account of all sides of experience is no safe guide.

Indian Philosophy calls in the aid of intuition to determine the nature of Truth. And in the case of conflict between reason and intuition, the higher value is given to the latter, as exhibiting a fact which is beyond the grasp of reason.

Reason cannot deny intuition, for the existence is a fact of intuition. The first act of apprehension, the first positing, is really intuitive rather than rational, for reason can only integrate, but cannot intuit. Hence Kant and Croce are right when they accept intuition as the first stage of knowledge. The apprehension of fact is really a matter of intuition. The crude fact is expressed in intuition. Intuition is expressive activity. The kind of intution that Kant or Croce speaks of is infra-conceptual and is the rudiment of knowledge in the sense that it is the initial psychical activity revealing facts or the manifold, but leaving to reason the finer constructions of knowledge.

Kant and Croce have confined intuition to æsthetic sensibility and cannot see the application of intuition in a higher or transcendental sense. Spinoza,

on the other hand, takes intuition to indicate the highest kind of knowledge, knowledge without distinction. Such knowledge is beyond reason; for reason, though it is integrating, cannot give us that knowledge which is immediate. These two kinds of use of the term intuition are diametrically opposed : the one gives us the concrete sense-knowledge, the other the abstract and transcendent knowledge. Kant and Croce are surely not alive to the kind of consciousness that Spinoza speaks of. Croce avoids all transcendentalism in metaphysics. Kant saw such metaphysics impossible so far as the speculative reason is concerned. Had Kant been aware of the kind of intuition of which Spinoza speaks, probably the conclusion of his philosophy would have been different. While Kant could find an escape from the limitation of Pure Reason by the intuitions of practical reason, Croce did not favour the metaphysical tendency in Philosophy and remained quite satisfied with immanentalism.

Bergson saw the limitation of intellect and based his philosophy upon intuition. Intuition and life are to him identical, and life is an ever-creative flow which reason or intellect cannot discern or grasp, for intellect conceives a static universe and the relations inherent in it.

Reality and intuition cannot be divorced, for this divorce implies the old tendency of Philosophy, which introduces a distinction between fact and knowledge, mind and matter, and other irreconcilable dualisms.

This tendency is also marked in Gentile, who criticized even Hegel that his dialectics laid emphasis on Thought as fact, and not as act.

Gentile, following Fichte, holds that reality is more an act than a fact. From this analysis two things stand clear, that intuition has been identified with reality, and that this intuition is more an act or a dynamical process than a fact. Kant has been the father to this thought, for to him mind is constructive and creative; his difficulty was that he could not carry his philosophy to a right conclusion. He could not establish this act to be the spiritual act behind the creative order.

Idealistic Philosophy in the West in its recent development has laid emphasis upon the creative ego or spirit as act, and breaks off from the traditional conception of Reality in Plato, Plotnius and others as fact.

Indian Philosophy, especially the Vedanta, while taking its inspiration from intuition, has not neglected reason, from which it has sought the reaffirmation of

intuition. But the word "intuition" is also in Indian Philosophy differently used.

Rāmānuja and the Vaisnava teachers used it in a dynamic sense. Intuition is an act, intuition intuits. Thought or spirit is essentially active, its essence is act. But it is act not understood in the sense of transformation but in the sense of expression or revelation. Spirit denies transformation, though spirit does not deny manifestation. Spirit is more expressive than creative, or it is creative in the sense of being expressive.

In the spiritual idealism of the Vaisnavas a distinction is drawn between dynamism with transformation and dynamism without transformation. The former is nature's, the latter is spirit's. The Vaisnavas accept from the Sankhya the dynamism of nature as distinct from the dynamism of spirit, but to them the spiritual reality is essentially an act of expression. But an act by itself is abstract, and hence they conceive it as centralized in subject. The subject is creative and expressive. The subject is the act centralized. It is then centricity of the act. And the subject brings with it conception of the object.

Spiritual act has this implication : it is an act which subsists always in reference to a subject-object relationship. The object and the subject are pure

abstractions without the spiritual act which in some sense relates them and creates them. But knowledge is not only expression, it is also meaning; and this idea of meaning introduces into it the concreteness which implies a demand of a constant reference to a subject.

The spiritual act without an implication is necessarily not fully spiritual. Spirituality implies self-consciousness and self-consciouness without meaning is not possible.

At this point a divergence is felt between the Vaisnavas and Bergson. Bergson accepts the essence of life to be creative change, but this process of change is continuous, and intuition naturally and continuously unfolds itself. It is intuition without meaning, for to know the meaning is really to make intuition static and stop its ceaseless becoming. Life is a flow, and a creative flow, and the dynamism has really no centricity; to centralize it is to spatialize it.

Bergson establishes the continuity of the process by making the past integrated with the future by memory; and life is memory, hence it is dynamic continuity, but this does not imply a centrality. Bergson holds that knowledge must transcend the concentration in subjectivity, for Eternal life anyhow must transcend empirical concentration in the subject.

But from this it does not follow that centrality is no fact in our knowledge. A continuous change without centricity makes such knowledge also meaningless. Bergson's reference to memory to account for the continuity of life is significant; life is finely associated with memory, but this continuity of life and memory without a central reference is to make the substance of a shadow.

The creative vital indeed frees us from the statical sense and makes change living before us, but a constant and flowing change without the sense of continuity is not intelligible. And continuity without centrality is not possible. A running continuity has also a centrality; Bergson would say that a centrality would deny ever-growing continuity. But ever-growing continuity to have a meaning must have a reference to a centrality. Centrality may deny the ever-creativeness of the continuity and its new changes. It may, but that only proves that change is not the final word in life. All change may not be of the cinematographic order; the events may not come in a series, they may be so integrated as to indicate their dynamic integrity; but the fascination of dynamism carries Bergson to a point where he can find no centrality in it. Hence his Philosophy has removed the

ordinary localization of change to a centre; this absence of anything central has been the weak point of Bergsonian Philosophy.

It sounds very well that it is a life of freedom which is ever growing and which goes on making endless history . We do not see the vital impetus, but see its expressions. But this ever-growing life is felt to be in a centre; without this centre it has no feeling, no knowledge. The loss of this central touch makes knowledge and life impossible. The Vaisnavas make intuition dynamic, but in reference to a centre. Now this reference of intuition to a centre at once changes its character.

The Vaisnavas emphasize the constant reference of the dynamism of life and knowledge to the centre. Intuition is self-intuition. The idea of a self is prominent there.

This philosophy will, therefore, introduce us into the conception of a conscious dynamism, which besides being ever-creative will also be ever-expressive. The idea of ever-creativeness has in it a limitation, a tension which it must overcome. But in the idea of expressiveness there is not this sense of limitation. The idea of creativeness fits in with a limited being, but not with the Absolute.

The Vaisnavic me find in expression a logical process, for this ı cannot override the initial distinction of a subject and an object, which it does not create, but which it manifests. Spirituality is a logical act and not simply an act. It is the act of synthetic reason. The ultimate reality is synthetic and concrete. In this logical unity fact and act are integrated, for an act is the expression of the fact; without a locus an act has indeed no conception. The new idealism of Gentile in emphasizing spirituality as an act unconsciously accepts the act as located in fact, for thought as a process cannot be dissociated from all centrality.

If the spiritual act has a centrality, this centrality has an expression and the distinction in the subjectivity is drawn according to the limited or unlimited expression.

The finite subjectivity has a limitation, the infinite has no limitation. The inter-subjective intercourse amongst the finite centres presupposes the possibility of a trans-subjective reality which embraces the whole experience. The transcendental ego is the real ego beyond the finite egos; but the Vaisnavas do not make the finite egos to be the shadows of the transcendental ego; though the transcendental ego touches

and impresses all the finite egos and centres, it impresses them just as the central principle of an organism vivifies all the parts. It has an autonomy, just as the finite has; but, besides its autonomy, it has also in it universal harmony. Autonomy impresses its personal nature. It is the index of personality. And personality is what makes every finite centre and subject to be real in the true sense of the term.

Its knowledge, its history has a true meaning; in one sense, it represents a universe. But to be personal is not only to be limited and to be confined; it also implies the overstepping of the limit; a person every moment is introduced into a universe of persons. To be a person is really to be living and active. Personality introduces us from the receptivity of theoretic reason into a community of spirits. This introduces to us the conception of harmony and fellowship, besides autonomy. Kant's defect lies in making knowledge and activity separate and the law of theoretic reason has been distinguished from the law of practical reason. The Vaisnavic teachers overcome this, for to them the theoretic activity is always associated with practical activity. Theoretic reason gives the knowledge of objects and persons, practical activity orients a spiritual fellowship in the world of

spirits. Theoretic reason is synthetic in the sense that it discovers the harmony which takes infinite shapes in the practical expression in life.

The life of will makes the one or the other note dominant in the spiritual life, but the theoretic activity with an eye to the total comprehension is more expressive of the harmony of spiritual life in which all notes of expression are assimilated. But this idea of harmony never dispenses with any phase of our spiritual life.

The Vaisnavic teachers have, therefore, emphasized the vision of the concrete universal, which embraces the whole reality in itself. This integration is not a process in time, but is for ever an accomplished process and fact. To the Indian mind, the idea of reality as a process has no great appeal, for to characterize reality as a process is to call it a possibility which is being made actual, a creativity and a becoming which is making history on the canvas of time. But reality must transcend time, otherwise its reality is a dream. Spirit may have an expression in time, but it cannot have its being in time. To be temporal is just the thing that spirit or reality denies.

Spirit might have an expression through it, and this expression may be supposed to be evolving or

developing, but in reality this is true to the finite mind which is accustomed to see things and events through time. Philosophic insight helps us to see the universe in its *Sub specie Eternitatis* and appraise things in their timeless aspects. To see reality through time is not philosophy; philosophical insight enters into the heart of reality in transcendence of time. Time shows changes; Philosophy sees the changeless beyond the changes. The intuition of things through time is natural to every man, but the philosophic demand is the search after the enduring. Our perception of reality through time feels it to be an eternal possibility, but philosophy tutors us to comprehend reality beyond and above time; and this comprehension shows it to be not only an infinite creativeness but the accomplished reality. If philosophy forgoes this claim, it forgoes its profession and call. The philosophic sense and intuition, therefore, present reality in its comprehensive totality and concreteness. Changes it accepts but it integrates them into Reality, for changes are conceived in time; but when theoretic reason reasserts itself it presents the Reality transcending time and even beyond the expression of creative will. Creative will and time are associated together.

But the Vaisnavas have not totally banished time

from the conception of Reality. Time has two senses. It implies changes. It implies continuity. Changes may imply change with transformation or change without transformation. The idea of creative possibility is associated with the former. The Vaisnavic philosophers see such changes as belonging more to the realm of nature than to the realm of spirit. Nature's dynamism cannot restore the effect to the cause, for the cause undergoes irrevokable changes. It cannot maintain a continuity. But the case is different with spirit; spirit is also act. The act is expression but not change, though the expression may be a process in time. The idea of a continuity is evident here, so much so that it is necessary to indicate a difference between the functioning of time in nature, and the functioning of time in spirit. In nature time functions as the principle of transformation, and creation is in a sense a transformation, otherwise it has no meaning. In spirit time functions as the principle of expression without any creative transformation; hence in the philosophic sense the idea of reality has been associated more with integral continuity than with change. *Sub specie Durationis* represents reality in creative continuity. *Sub specie Eternitatis* represents Reality in integral synthesis.

Continuity and integrity are the main criteria of Reality in Vaisnavic philosophy. The idea of infinite as possibility is an idea relative to the scientific mind, but to the philosophic mind the infinite is complete and integral existence.

Art gives us the rhythm of creativeness, and it essentially consists in the expression of life through a definite harmony. Creative harmony cannot be integral, for creativeness lies really in the over-emphasis upon a definite note or tune. Religion is the effort to embrace the central rhythm in life, the harmony of harmonies. Philosophy synthetizes the creative expression in the completeness of life. It is always the finer synthesis of art and religion.

Philosophic intuition comprehends the whole integral life. It is essentially vision, knowledge and wisdom, which can give us the finest understanding of the complete perspective of life in divine rhythm of expression through nature and beyond nature.

Buddhism presents a unique theory of change. It accepts change without continuity. Even if there be a continuity, the continuity is more apparent than real, for really time is more a series than a continuity. The moments in time have their origin,

growth and destruction. Each successive moment is a detached unit in itself; it has no link of continuity with the prior or the posterior moment; the fact that a continuity is felt is more or less an illusion. The illusiveness of continuity cannot be felt unless the finer analytical insight is developed; life in its normal course can never feel it. The world becomes different in different moments. Relativism in life and knowledge is complete here; the universe every moment is created and destroyed.

Naturally we regard life as a continuous flow; but with the dawn of metaphysical sense, the idea of continuity dissolves into the idea of loose or disconnected movements. Buddhism does not accept the idea of the present as sociality, as evolving out of the past and as modifying it. The past is for ever past, there is no link between the past, the present and the future. The link between them is memory, but there is no sufficient reason to show how we can link up the events in time. Before one passes into another, it dies out completely.

Memory creates a unity and continuity where there is none. Memory creates a false hope. It is the source of illusory continuity. Knowledge breaks this illusory continuity of memory and institutes in its

place the complete relativism of experience. Memory is associated with our instinctive life and functions in ignorance.

Ignorance has been the root cause of interpreting life as continuity and history. In fact, so long as Ignorance lasts, history becomes eternal; for Buddhism considers that the memory of the previous lives has been the determining force in the next and, so long as the philosophic vision does not dawn upon us, life runs as a continuity. The Samskaras become the determining forces of life. A cycle of life is determined by the previous cycle. The former again determines the next.

Life is history—a becoming. Had this been the conclusion of Buddhism, there would not remain much difference between Buddhism and Bergsonism; but in Buddhism the conception of life as history is not the final conclusion. The conception of history in Croce and Hegel is real. In Croce, the conception of life as an ideal unfolding is real. It may be immanentalism. There are traces of immanentalism in Buddhism, but not in the real sense or in the sense on which Croce lays stress.

The immanentalism in Croce, however anti-metaphysical it is, is not to be confused with the

empiricism of Buddhism; history in Croce is immanentally real, in Buddhism it is only empirically real, and Croce regards empiricism as a psuedo-concept. The main teaching of Buddhism is not history, which is illusory; its fundamental teaching is the relativism of experience which defies history, and makes history in the real sense impossible. The idea of history binds us, the idea of relativism makes for redemption. This extreme relativism naturally has its counter-part in the doctrine of Nirvana as the Calm behind the relativism of experience. This Nirvana is called suchness. It is indefinable in concept. It is supra-logical.

Buddhism has recognized the practical reason and the theoretical reason. From the standpoint of practical reason it has accepted the fleeting course of life and its continuity through cycles of birth and death; and ignorance has been the root cause of the idea of the self which is nothing but a congeries of psychic states. The idea of a false self brings with it the idea of Karma and merit and demerit. Self begets desires; desires, Karma; Karma, attachment and greed; they beget Samskāras (tendencies), Samskāra, birth. The cycle is ever repeated. The sense of the self has been the root cause of miseries, and this sense which

originates from ignorance must be set aside by the clear sense of non-continuity and impermanence. The philosophical doctrine of impermanence brings with it the ethical doctrine of pessimism. But Buddhism as a philosophic doctrine has great value in emphasizing the relativism of experience and in discovering the ineffable Calm beyond all experience. Authorities have emphasized this or that aspect of Buddhism, its ethical aspect has been its main attraction, its nihilistic aspect has been its condemnation; but scholars are of opinion that beyond the relativism of life and experience Buddhism really posits the supra-conceptual Reality. Modern research has indeed introduced a more realistic sense of Nirvana as the completeness of being rather than the dropping of the sense of self and experience into a void.

"Nirvana is happiness." But this happiness is not like an ordinary feeling which is transitory, and, therefore, in the end, misery. The Nirvanic happiness must be, therefore, distinct from feeling. No empirical concept can describe its ineffable blissfulness; but this is attained when the relativities of life and experience die out. The determination of that which transcends thought is not possible in the terms of thought.

Buddhism seeks the end of individual existence in Nirvana, which is neither fact nor act, neither object nor movement. It is supra-spatial, supra-temporal, supra-conceptual. Between the blissful existence of Nirvana and the momentary changes of becoming, Buddhism does not see any synthesis.

Nirvana puts an end to the chain of dependent origination and causation and, therefore, there is no touch of the empirical self and possibility of its reasserting itself through its inborn tendencies after death. The profundity of Buddhism lies in pointing to the ineffable blissful state of existence, call it Nirvana or suchness or thatness, something which is unique in the sense that it is neither covered by the process of becoming nor in any way related to the chain of causation. It is not true that Buddhism denies the continuity of life to introduce us into a void. If one pursues the mystical side of Buddhism, the conclusion becomes evident that Nirvana is not void, for the finest psychic experiences in psychic fruitions are set at naught before the ineffable silence of Nirvana. Life is indeed released from the phantasmagoria of the senses, and finds its quietude which none can attain unless all the claims of life are forgone. The traces of philosophical Absolutism found in the

Buddhistic conception of Nirvana are more clearly worked out in the Vendatism of Samkara.

Samkara, like Kant, exhibits two tendencies in his philosophy, originating from the Pure Reason and the Practical Reason of our nature. His philosophy presents, therefore, two aspects. From the practical standpoint he emphasizes the theological and the cosmological viewpoint which recognizes God as the cause of the universe, and which accepts God as the moral ideal and the spiritual inspirer. Our will introduces us into a fellowship of wills embraced in the Divine. The artistic and the religious aspect of life are centred in the practical will, and this will presents to us the idea of a creator and a redeemer. Samkara finds that causation without the dynamism of will is impossible. This aspect of his philosophy is akin to Vaisnavic teaching, but with this difference that such philosophy is no true philosophy with him. It is a concession to realistic thinking. The idea of a becoming Samkara accepts, and to him this becoming has a better basis than Buddhism, for the becoming is the *Lila,* spontaneous expression of God in creation. The Vaisnavas find the essence of being in its expressiveness, in the constant stir to express itself through history.

Samkara Vedanta accepts the world to be a divine imagining, more an act of imagination than of will, in the usual sense of the term.

The theory of generic volition is a concession to the realistic sense, and Samkara speaks as a realist at times and accounts for the creation by generic volition; but to him creation is not to be taken in a real sense, and if it indicates any purpose or finality of meaning, it is a more or less finite interpretation put upon a process apparently spontaneous. The doctrine of *Lila* in Samkara has this meaning, that the divine in its cosmic expression is not guided by any purpose or end, for the Absolute can have no purposive movement in his being.

In Vaisnavism the movement of divine life is in Ananda, in bliss; and, since the Divine is dynamic, its movement in delight is unceasing. In Samkara the divine movement in creation or evolution is really a movement in delight, but this movement is merely a limitation of his being, for the Divine is unlimited expansion. It has no necessity to express itself; hence a purpose cannot be ascribed to it, nor can it be said that the Divine moves in delight. The world is a divine imagining, and the imagining can have no purpose; it is a play without any

end or any definite meaning. If one is anxious to call it a play in delight, Samkara would not object to it. But he would add that the play in delight is after all imagining, and as such, an appearance in space and time without being real. The difficulty arises truly when Reality is ascribed to appearance and then some relation is sought to be established between the world and God, appearance and Reality. Samkara conceived the appearance to be an imaginative expression of Reality, but in calling it imagination he did neither deny its existence altogether, nor posit or affirm its reality in the same category with the Absolute. A construction of will differs from a construction of imagination. The construction of will is real, the construction of imagination is illusory, but not altogether unreal.

There is then a difference between Samkara and Bergson, between Samkara and Buddhism and between Samkara and Vaisnavism. Samkara accepts with Bergson the creative continuity of the *élan vital*. Samkara calls it the creative continuity of Maya. Maya is the creative principle. And the creative process is continuous, eternal and spontaneous. But while to Bergson the *élan vital* is the only reality, to Samkara the principle of becoming has no reality in

the true sense; the divine imagining can be real in the psychological or scientific sense, but not in the metaphysical sense; for the divine imagining is relative to the order of appearance, and has meaning so long as there is appearance.

The divine imagining is the reality apprehended as creative, but creativeness is seeming and not real, for Being is not creative in the real sense of the term. Buddhism accepts the momentariness of experience and its discontinuity, Samkara does not go so far and exhibits the realistic sense in affirming the truth of experience. Absolute relativism ends in scepticism; hence Samkara maintains a continuity and a reality of the world of experience. The world, as it appears, has a history, but he differs from Vaisnavism in ascribing to it an ideal history, since it is more an imaginative construction than a real one. The Vaisnavas differ from him in this and make the construction in every point of it real. It comes to this, then, that Samkara acknowledges the world to be an ideal expression in space and time of the Absolute, and hence his world has not that value and meaning which the Vaisnavas ascribe to it.

Kant discovers the realm of values against the world of pure reason, but Samkara discovers that the

construction of will cannot be absolute. Will has absolutely no meaning apart from the creative concentration. But creative order does not reveal the metaphysical reality in itself; for it at best exhibits the reality in reference to its expressive urge. Samkara accepts this creative urge of spirit, but cannot call it real in the same sense as the Absolute, and to him the creative sense represents a higher degree of reality than the changing effects. He, like Kant, sees the free causality of will and the mechanical determination of the world of effects. Effects, therefore, cannot have the same reality with the cause. Spirit has free causality, but this causality produces events and effects which have ideal existences and not real.

The world of value is always ideal to Samkara, for spirit is real; though its causality is free, it does not represent its true nature.

Causality is related to an efficiency, and, therefore, always has reference to the world it produces. But its effects surely cannot have that character and reality. The effects have an ideal character; the cause is real.

The ideality of the effect and the reality of cause is what characterizes the tendency of Samkara's

philosophy. Samkara sees the difficulty of the position which holds the reality of the creative dynamism and the complete transcendence of spirit. He also feels the absurdity of the position which holds the reality of creative dynamism of spirit.

The former gives us a dualism, the latter conceives a transformation of the spirit. Both of them present difficulties. Hence he strikes a *via media,* which makes the spirit creative in ideal sense; hence the manifold world in him has an ideality. The creation is true in practical sense for the pragmatic effects it produces. In practical life, a thing is true by its practicableness, in so far as it affects will. The Ideal creation is a world in space and time. To Kant pure reason is constitutive, to Samkara the self is creative in values and appearances, but the world of values is in no way higher than the world of appearances. Value is also an appearance; it acquires liveliness because of its creating a satisfaction in practical life. A mere appearance may also have this phase, but the real or ideal satisfaction makes for the greater reality of values than of appearances.

The pragmatic importance that makes the world of will appear so much more real does not make any difference between appearances as such. Appearances

in dreams are also agreeable. Appearances in imagination are quite agreeable, just as the creations of will are. And on the ground of usefulness or practicability their character cannot really differ. The creations of the self are appearances, equally ideal. It does not matter whether the ideal creations are, in some cases, satisfying to the needs of the will, and in others, not satisfying to its needs.

Samkara gets over the dualism of ideas and matter, Purusa and Prakriti, the sensible and the super-sensible, by predicating the world as ideal and Brahman to be transcendental and real. Brahman projects the universe, but it transcends it. Fichte could see the duality of subject and object indicated in speculative reason; the theoretical reason in one way creates the non-ego and understands it in the reference to ego, the subject.

Fichte could not get over this duality in speculative reason, though he sees straight the difficulties of Kant and removes the inherent gulf between knowledge (appearance) and reality by declaring the thing-in-itself to be self.

Fitche makes the great admission that the not-self is due to the subjectivity of the ego in knowledge, and that this inherent projection of theoretical Reason,

the self transcends in practical Reason where it assimilates the not-self within self. Gentile accepts the subjectivity but also accepts the multiplicity of empirical egos with the transcendental ego as the main subject. The Vedanta recognizes the subjectivity of the Ego and feels that this subjectivity at once creates its limitation, for it binds it down to an ideal creation as its object. But this ideal creation, instead of being assimilated in the self in the practical Reason, is totally transcended in the subject as Freedom.

The idea of subject makes our intuition concrete and introduces the conception of the multiplicity of subjects, for the finite subject cannot embrace the total ideal creation. Hence the Vedanta conceives a super-subject to cover the totality of experience. In this point the Vedanta agrees with Gentile, but while Gentile conceives the reality of the transcendental subject (which he calls ego), the Vedanta feels that the empirical egos and the transcendental ego as subjects are equally concentrated; the creative spirit is really concrete. The Vedanta, instead of emphasizing the subject as act, has really denied it in the real movement by calling it freedom. The Vedanta discovers that the pure nature of the subject is really freedom, by which it means that subject really

is more percipience than percipient activity, the indifferent witness to all events and things, but never the creative will nor the constructive logical reason.

Transcendence proves that, in knowledge, subjectivity is not mere concentration; the concentration comes with will. This difference is indicated by characterizing the subject as freedom. Even the feeling subject is freer from thought or mental construction, but it is still the subject that can be open to introspection; it is free but not freedom itself. But in the subject as percipience, this limitation is not present, and this even is not open to introspection. Such subject is subject without a logical centrality, or feeling content, or thought-concreteness. Such subject we call freedom.

VI

THE BEAUTIFUL

The Indian Mind draws a distinction between beauty of the spirit and beauty of nature. Nature in her apparent nakedness has no beauty, but it is beautiful in so far as it is the expression of spirit. A man's body, his appearance, his actions, may be beautiful in so far as they are indicative of meaning and expression. The finer the expression, the more beautiful the figure. The figure may be harmonious in all parts, but it is beautiful when it is such as is indicative of the underlying meaning of the soul. Indian art fits the form to the expression. The medium must be plastic enough to carry the impress of the deep-lying harmony within it.

Realism in art is not India's ideal. Even nature's production are not exactly nature's. Nature is the sensible expression of the super-sensible. The super-sensible is nature's self and reality. Nature is really sublime and beautiful, because it is not only nature. Nature represents in its integrity the divine harmony and the divine art. When the Indian artist follows nature, he follows a nature that is not blind.

Nature is never blind. Nature speaks wisdom, reveals beauty. Those that have eyes to see can see. Indian art reproduces not the form, but the spirit in creation. The heart of nature oscillates in delight, the life in nature dances in rhythm and harmony.

Nature is the divine poetry revealed in creation. The Isa Upanisad conceives God as the poet. The poet is the creator, who moulds and remoulds nature to make the finest expression.

What then is beauty? Beauty is essentially expression. And this expression must be conscious expression. And conscious expression must be rhythmical and harmonious. It is rhythmical, for all discord arises from obstructive and irresponsive matter.

Beauty belongs to the dynamic expression of spirit, for in its abstract luminosity and expression the conception of beauty is not possible. The transcendent consciousness is supra-creative existence, and at this height beauty cannot exist, for it is an impersonal existence. Hence beauty has been associated with the concrete expression of the Transcendent. Beauty is the Divine on the point of expression.

The Vaisnavas maintain the concrete Transcendental and hence to them beauty is the finest concept. Beauty is the heart of existence, and the soul of beauty

is expression. But this expression is always concrete, though it has not any touch of nature or matter in it. It is not psychic beauty. It is supramental beauty. It is characterized by its super-sensible transparence, expression and harmony. It is the expression of the divine bliss in the harmony of life and in the music of the soul. God is beauty. God as beauty is concrete and dynamic in its expression.

Beauty is associated with the dynamism of life and spirit. Beauty is soul-absorbing, soul-elevating. It uplifts. It frees the soul from the touch of matter and introduces into it spirit. In this exalted height of existence the soul feels a new attraction, a new delight in the wide expression of spirit, not through nature, but through itself; and the freedom from nature's touch impresses it with the absorbing sense of ever fresh delight, exquisite harmony, and softness of expression.

In this transcendent æstheticism the soul becomes free from the limitations of the sense and makes manifest the infinite shades of expression. But transcendental beauty, however finely expressive, must be also concrete, though it is enjoyed by the soul and not by the sense. Concreteness, besides dynamism and expression, is another criterion of beauty. Vaisnavas

recognize æsthetic contemplation as the perfect emancipation of intellect from will, for beauty is to them the soul's attraction and the eye's rest, and in its intensification it elevates us from the working of the senses, the mind and the understanding and seals the union of love in complete absorption. But the enjoyment of beauty is not possible unless the beauteous object is concrete. This enjoyment is conscious delight but in æsthetic intoxication the soul is absorbed in intensive enjoyment.

C. E. M. Joad thinks that the soul of beauty lies in this absorption, in other words, in the identification of the subject with the object, a momentary release from the insurgent demands of conscious life. He falls in almost with the view of Schopenhauer in making beauty consist essentially in the freedom from the demands of will. But the Vaisnavas enjoy a subtle attraction, which gives calm and poise in the enjoyment of the beautiful. It transcends the limitation of life in its actualities. Beauty has also finer touches upon feeling, which make the life move in fine rhythm and divine harmony. Will in this height is not will in the ordinary sense of the term. It is the intense attraction, the tendency to be united with the Divine; but this unity is not absorp-

tion, but a conscious appreciation, admiration, enjoyment and service. Life unfolds through all aspects of its yearning for the Divine; and, if the æsthetic enjoyment keeps the will suspended for the moment, it is reinforced by the desire to move in divine oscillation. Life then becomes quick, fresh, inspired; and experience becomes varied and swift. Every moment is filled with infinite experience.

The Vaisnavas conceive the play of the finer aspects of the senses in the super-sensible, and, therefore, while in the divine beauty the soul has all kinds of satisfaction of its entire being; the senses find their satisfaction in the deific form, the soul in the formless. The delight of the beautiful is all-absorbing, all the instincts are transfigured and divinized in this height. Man has truly been made after the image of God; and when the touch of nature is removed, the divine in the man enjoys the concrete form in the Divine with all the expressions of life through all the channels.

The senses are, so to speak, spiritualized; and in this acceptation the Vaisnavas synthetize the conception of beauty as transcendental with its sensuous expression in the soul. It anticipates the Hegelian doctrine that Beauty is the idea as it reveals itself to the senses. "Beauty is the shining of the Idea

through matter." (Tolstoy: What is Art? Page 100.) The Vaisnavas add that this sense is supra-sensuous sense and obtains in the realm of spiritual transcendence. Nature becomes denaturalized, it becomes the reflection of spirit. In the perception of the beautiful, the finer sense of nature, as ultimately the expression of spirit, dawns upon us. It is nature when the senses run opposite to spirit, and are absorbed in their crude enjoyment; it is spirit, when the crudeness of nature vanishes to make it a fit medium of spirit's expression. Matter is dematerialized.

The Vaisnavas, like Croce, dispense with the content and the form in Æsthetics. Beauty is expression and expression is beauty.

Croce says: "In the æsthetic fact, expressive activity is not added to the facts of the impression, but these latter are forms and elaborated by it. The impressions reappear as it were in expression—The Æsthetic fact is form and nothing but form". There may be a content, and the content is that which is convertible into form, but it has no determinable qualities until this transformation takes place. While to Croce the Æsthetic is the expressive activity in the sense-order, to the Vaisnavas the Æsthetic is the expressive activity in the supra-sensuous order. True

beauty is in the soul; in this supra-sensuous order the expression takes determinate forms in the supra-sensible universe.

Idealizing imitation of nature is artistic beauty because nature is beauty expressed in form. While the Vaisnavas agree thus far with Croce's theory of expression, they cannot subscribe to Croce's theory that beauty does not belong to the world of feeling. Beauty is expression which causes a blissful or delightful feeling. The soul of beauty lies in bliss. A mere expression or expressive activity is always delightful, for bliss is associated with expression. An expression never leaves us cold, it produces serene and calm delight. Without this element of delight the soul-absorbing character of beauty cannot be explained.

The Indian mind shows a correct attitude in associating bliss with all finely expressive activity, this bliss is not to be identified with the crude feeling of pleasure. Bliss consists in serene, tranquil and unlimited expression and ineffable delight. This delight is expressed in radiant feeling and transparent joyousness, which are not to be identified with crude sense-experience.

Beauty's call elevates our nature and the whole being undergoes a transformation before the soul's

nature find satisfaction in it, for it gives them refined delight can have its expression. All the parts of our delight and expressive joy.

Croce gives a subjective view of beauty, for beauty is intuition and intuition is expression. The Vaisnavas take the objective view of beauty. True beauty is the transcendental expressive activity of the soul.

Indian Rhetoric draws a distinction between Rasasvadabada and Brahmāsvādabāda, *i.e.*, the taste of delight in finer and sublime sentiments and the taste of delight in transcendent consciousness. The æsthetic intuition as well as the transcendent intuition imply freedom from the ordinary laws of psychic relativity. The subject is released from the intense tension, the sense of activity and psychic sense in time, and enjoys a momentary forgetfulness of the situation and the environment. He may not even retain the thread of consciousness in the ordinary sense, for he becomes almost identified with the object he enjoys. The subject enjoys an object in complete detachment from everything in psychic history and surrounding. But in transcendent consciousness, this detachment is complete; there is not the least play of the subject or of the object, nor a merging of the one

in the other. The æsthetic consciousness has its *ineffability, transparence* and *luminosity*. There is the subtle vibration in the conscious being opening its finer layers in momentary abeyance of the time-sense, but not in the withdrawal of the object completely. The object is detached and enjoyed in isolation, for the æsthetic enjoyment does not allow the least disturbance of attention and its direction from it. In the æsthetic consciousness sometimes there is a rise and fall in the psychic barometer according to the intensity of feeling evoked by the object; the presence of the object in the psychic consciousness and its constant reference mark it off from the transcendent consciousness. The object is a permanent factor in æsthetic intuition, though there is an occasional merging of the subject in it.

With regard to æsthetics, four theories are ordinarily suggested in Indian Rhetoric: (i) the objective theory; (ii) the subjective theory; (iii) the reflex theory; (iv) the expressionist theory.

Bhatta Laullata represents the first theory. It maintains that beauty is located in the object, in the original matter. This theory has much in common with the realistic attitude of the Vaisnavas who maintain that beauty is not the creation of the subject, it is

rather something that is evolved in the subject by the impress of the object. Bhattanāyaka, on the other hand, maintains that beauty lies more in form than in matter; and hence he naturally accepts the subjective theory; for the form of the integration is imposed by the mind upon the impression and is not contained therein.

The object in independence of the subject is merely crude psychic matter, which is chiselled into beauty by the formal element supplied by the mind.

This theory really supports the conclusion that beauty is more or less an idealization of the object, and originates in relation to the subject. This theory naturally concludes that this formal element is also a social element. The element of partibility in beauty is possible because it is more or less construction of the mind. Mind works even in æsthetic appreciation according to a formal law, and since this law is of mind, it is true of every mind. The formal element gives the necessary character of beauty.

There is a third theory, the reflex theory of beauty held by Sankhu which maintains that beauty is the reflection of the original. This theory does not show much sense. The original must be beautiful if the

copy is to be beautiful.' Copy is the imitation; the copy reflects the original.

This theory naturally makes a distinction between beauty in nature and beauty in artistic creation, and seems to argue that artistic creation is beautiful, because beauty is more or less studied and conscious art. To be artistic is to be conscious; this conscious claim is not present in nature, for there is expression, but not a studied expression.

This theory sees more in human creation than in nature's creation; but it is wrong in conception. Art is living and true, when nature is exactly reproduced. And it is wild doctrine which can hold that beauty lies in nature's reproduction, but not in nature.

Abhinava Gupta anticipates Croce in his expressionist theory of beauty. He differs from Bhattanāyaka who emphasizes the feeling element in the perception of the beautiful. Abhinava Gupta impresses the element of expression in beauty, for beauty is a concept not only related to feeling. It is pre-eminently expression; but while Croce has identified beauty completely with expression, Abhinava Gupta has not done so. He accepts the feeling element in beauty, otherwise there would be no difference between a pure expression and a beauteous expression. A pure expression

may leave us cold, but the beauteous expression gives us delight. Croce ignores the psychic element of feeling in beauty, but Abhinava Gupta does not. "A thing of beauty is joy for ever."

The objective theory and the expressionist theory can be reduced to the metaphysical theory, for beauty is expression of the supra-natural reality, and nature is beautiful because it is really and eloquently expressive.

In drawing a distinction between Brahmāsvādabāda and Rasāsvādabāda Indian Rhetoric shows the requisite difference between Truth and Beauty. The Vaisnavas do not accept this distinction, for to them Truth is concrete, beauty also is concrete. Truth is beauty, beauty is Truth. There may be specific difference between them; still they characterize the same ineffable existence. But this conclusion is not maintained by all. Truth is the higher concept. Beauty belongs to the intelligible order of expression. Truth is the supra-intelligible and supra-conceivable existence.

Truth relates to Existence, and especially to transcendent Existence, Beauty to the Archetypal world and Good to the world of Values. To the

ancient Greeks the Good used to possess the highest place. Beauty came next.

Plotinus says: "Let each man become God-like and each man beautiful, if he would behold Beauty and God. For he will first move in his ascent to the region of intellect and there he will know all the beauties of form and will say that this is the beauty of Ideas, for all things are beautiful through these, the offspring and essence of intellect. But that which is beyond intellect we call the nature of the Good, from which the beautiful radiates on every side, so that in common speech it is called First Beauty. But if we distinguish between the intelligibles, we may say that intelligible beauty belongs to the world of ideas, but that the Good which is beyond these is the fountain and principle of the beautiful, or the Good and the First Beauty may be considered under one principle, apart from the beauty of the world of Ideas." The Indian system, like the Vedanta and the Sankhya, would confine beauty to the world of ideas or creative intelligences and forms, in the immanent order, but would not confine it to the transcendent existence which is Truth. This the Vedanta calls Bliss or Ananda, but not beauty; Beauty is the concrete image and expression of Ananda.

The Indian thinkers have given to Truth the supreme place and category—and Truth is transcendental. Good relates to desires and their satisfaction, and naturally refers to the vital needs; hence its order cannot be very fine. When Good implies sanctity and holiness (the Vaisnavas mainly view it in this light), it has no doubt a supra-vital and supramental existence; but even the Vaisnavas have placed equal emphasis on both Truth and Beauty as representing the supramental aspects of existence. But others think, beauty lies deep in being, its spring is the archetypal order, and especially is related to its aspect of harmony amongst ideals and forms.

True beauty lies here. Beyond it has no range of existence. It is superior to creative urges of will, however fine, in this, that it implies a form of will-lessness, a freedom in which the soul has the festivity of delight in its infinite relaxation. This freedom from stirring and striving makes beauty the more attractive to us. The good makes the personality vivid and forceful, the beautiful drops it in apparent forgetfulness. This dropping of personality, even for a moment, has also been accepted by the Vaisnavas in the states of æsthetic exaltation and in the depth of love.

The consciousness of the beautiful is of a superior

type, hence it admits us at times into a world of supra-personal but not completely transcendent existence. The world of beauty intermediates between transcendence on one side and creativeness on the other.

Real beauty prevails then in the realm of forms in the causal world. These forms are concrete, they represent a harmony in the heart of existence.

But there are beauties in creation. They are the successful reproduction of the archetypal ideas in the world of sensuous matter. Here the form is imposed upon matter or finds an expression through matter. The easier and more graceful expression gives the finer beauty. Where the matter yields to the form naturally and easily, there is the real beauty.

Creation to be beautiful must be rhythmical, easy and spontaneous. The more easily matter yields itself to the form, the more beautiful it is. Where the form is expressed eloquently through the garb of matter, beauty in creation is greatest.

The heart of art is beauty. Art is creative, but its creativeness lies in expressiveness.

Expressiveness has degrees. It varies according to the fineness of creative inspiration and the plasticity of the instrument of expression. If the inspiration can

express itself with ease and freedom, it becomes finely artistic.

But inspiration can be received from different strata of being; hence artistic creations differ in their impressions. Inspirations may be received from the vital nature or from the still finer planes of consciousness. They will give us different forms of creation. Some will affect directly our vital-mind, some will create strong feelings, and some will produce deep currents of the soul. The value of art will depend upon the kind of rhythm and harmony it produces in our psychic being.

Every artistic creation gives us delight, for that is the soul of art. But its artistic fineness and inspiration will mainly depend upon the part of being it affects, and the kind of response it elicits. The vital emotion, the pensive mood, the finer delight, the sense of spiritual ease, the light play of feeling—are a few amongst the infinite shades of the effects of art upon our mind, but all of them have not the same value.

Artistic inspiration should not be guided by any standard other than the intensity of expressiveness and the kind of feeling it generates.

Genuine art is the source of healthful feeling and serene expression. It cannot be otherwise; when

art produces any other feeling, it cannot be genuine. Genuine art will enter into the soul of nature and reproduce the finer ideas and harmonies sleeping in her bosom. Nature has finer harmonies, beauties and sublimities, and the more the artistic intuition reproduces the spirit rather than the flesh, the finer the creations become; there is the melody and the music of life in the inmost existence of our being, and one who can catch inspiration therefrom can produce the finest creation. Realistic reproduction with the touch of spirit may appeal to the vital-mind, but not to the spirit.

But this should not lead us to suppose that beauty always lies in the gentler movements of life. It also lies in the more strenuous movements. There is beauty in the rugged mountain, there is beauty in the dance of death, there is beauty in naked nature, there is beauty in the fierce and the terrible. There is apparent discord or conflict, and hence one naturally tries to avoid being involved; but nature exhibits her inner fathomless being sometimes in such an expression; if the human soul can forgo its usual weakness and timidity and love of creative harmony, it can see and feel the more majestic harmony of nature revealed in her ruggedness, fierce-

ness and destruction. This harmony is supra-vital and upsets the vital-expectations; and hence it does not make the usual appeal. But the supra-vital and the supramental are expressed in such sublimities. There is the harmony which elevates us from the functioning of the vital-mental to the working of the spirit. It is rather the tendency of spirit to assert its own completely by cutting asunder the vital and the mental limitations. There is the silent music in discord, and the finer harmony in conflict.

There is beauty in Krisna's Rāsa dance. There is beauty in Siva's dance of Death. The one exhibits the soul of beauty; the other, the soul of sublimity. But both of them are equally artistic. The one moves the heart in radiant feelings and rosy colours. The other stills the movement of heart and hushes our whole being to encounter a superhuman experience.

Life is music and harmony and in no phase of life can these be absent. Nothing is wrong with life. Nothing could be wrong in it. To understand and enjoy it, it is necessary at times to be superhuman, that it may be possible for us to judge the nature of life in itself, apart from all humanistic values. This is also the true value of art.

When our mental horizon becomes wide and

responsive to the inner secrets of nature, everything in beauty exhibits its beauty. Nature is the creation of the divine art, and things appear ugly, because the inner meaning and rhythm are not revealed to us. The greater penetration into the casual aspect of nature can acquaint us with the meaning of nature's exhibitions.

The true artist is he who can rise above human feelings and can present the secrets of nature unaffected by their apparent beauty or ugliness. This requires sympathy with life's movement in all its forms and expressions. The artistic intuition must not only catch the form, but also the meaning, the expression, for in nature the meaning determines the forms and fits it. The artist, of all men, must intuit the hidden meaning and adjustments.

Viewed in this sense, art should be supposed to exist for art's sake. The question of morality or ethical taste in art can arise only from ethical limitations, which surely art transcends. And true Art expresses perfection of form, revelation of the creative rhythm.

Beauty is expressive. Expression may have degrees of fineness, with the degrees of reflection of the inner sense and meaning, the harmony and rhythm;

and the merit of art rises therefrom. And, since the form of art follows its meaning, the appreciation of art will be relative to the perception of the meaning. This will naturally give rise to the relativity of artistic understanding.

Artistic appreciation is not to be regulated by the usual sense of ethical fineness. The moral sense is different from the artistic sense. The artist is the creator of beauty, and beauty truly is the virtue of the soul; the two categories, beauty and good, differ and the one is in no way limited by the other. The true artist, in representing the free elastic and creative life, naturally has a vantage ground over the moralist and commands a wider outlook than his; but still it must be conceived that the perception of this elasticity is relative to the fineness and transparence of being which is associated with the ethical responsiveness and purity of being. This presence or absence of the finer tuning of being determines the nature of artistic creation. The responsiveness of the pure and the impure souls to beauty cannot be the same. In the impure it may stir up the sense of the vital beauty, in the pure it may stir up the sense of spiritual beauty. Artists, of all men, require this spirit of responsiveness to the finer currents of life, and unless life can be

lived, this opening is not always possible. It is difficult to appreciate the artistic creations of spiritual geniuses, for the layers open to them are not always open to all. In artistic expression there are different grades inasmuch as they reveal the different strata and layers of beauty.

The vision of a Dante may not appeal to all, for many do not possess the finer insight and responsiveness of Dante to life. Art grows fine as life grows fine, for art is the expression of life. The creations of the vital mind appeal to us, but the soft, sombre and placid creations of spirit are often misread, for in us life may not move on the spiritual level. Art, no doubt, exists for art's sake, but it could hardly be forgotten that the finer creations are possible with the release of finer impulses and instincts, and nature cannot reveal her fineness to those who show no regard for it. "Art for Art's sake certainly—Art as a perfect form and discovery of Beauty; but also Art for the soul's sake, the spirit's sake and the expression of all that the soul, the spirit wants to seize through the medium of beauty."—(Aurobindo on Art for Art's sake.)

Many are not responsive to the music of the soul, the music that fills the life. Many are not responsive

to the deeper tones in music which make us more and more alert and self-conscious. There is surely a difference between the music of a Keats and the music of a Byron, a Wordsworth and a Shelley, a Browning and a Tagore. Some awaken vitality, some finer shades of feeling in the deep of the soul.

The purity of the soul is then an essential condition for implanting the divine art on earth. True art is expressive of the finer attitudes of the soul : beauty, holiness, power and dignity. The artist's privilege is to seize upon the deeper layers of being enfolded in the soul and to give expression to them. And in the height of our being art comes to possess a religious character, for it represents a form of divine inspiration. "Art is the manifestation of the beautiful soul and its aim is the education, not of the *mind* only—that is the business of the savant; nor of the heart only—that is the affair of the moral preacher, but of the whole man."—(Tolstoy, What is Art? Page 98.)

The artist is in a sense a seer and he can be hardly that unless his soul is pure enough to be responsive, not only in the vital-mind, but also in the spiritual mind.

VII
VALUES

The Hindu mind exhibits a fine appreciation of the creative values of life. Life is constantly unfolding, stirring for graceful expression. In this process of unfoldment, the Hindu mind has shown due regard to the setting and environment and the conditions of the growth of life.

In life's evolution life's forces should be brought out and released. Evolution should, therefore, follow a regulation and a method, otherwise the true value may not be realized.

Life's flowering into the finest values cannot ignore life as concrete; if life is looked upon as concrete, its development has a meaning. Life blossoms as a flower, and in this blossoming to accept some and to deny other functions exhibits imperfect understanding of life.

The Indian mind is keenly alive to the growth of life on earthly soil, and hence has not failed to set a premium upon all the factors of life that require growth and satisfaction. The Indian mind is not unaware of the intrinsic and the extrinsic values of

life, but its synthetic grasp affiliates the extrinsic also into the intrinsic as contributing and instrumental to the realization of the intrinsic worth. The concrete man is a vital-mental being which can rise to fineness and perfection to exhibit the still finer nature yet to be expressed. But the vital-mental being and its perfecting are a necessary condition to further evolution.

The instrumental values are contributory to the ultimate values. Hence the pure utilitarian or pragmatic values have never satisfied the Hindu mind; it has never been oblivious of them, but they have been welcome as preparing the ground for the still finer unfoldment of life. They are welcome in so far as the inner unfolding is dependent upon the external conditions.

Life has in it the law of growth and evolution, and the incessant restlessness in man is indicative of the urge to growth in fineness and subtlety of being. The urge to grow is called Dharma in Hindu Philosophy. Dharma is primarily the urge to growth, development, and secondarily the regulation of conduct in a way conducive to it.

Dharma in Indian Philosophy has a wider connotation—it sums up all the tendencies to growth

and development and self-expression, and hence it covers complex adaptations.

Since Dharma implies the urge to growth, and since the outlets of growth may be infinite in view of the station, the knowledge, the intuition of the man, its concrete expression will naturally be manifold. The abstract man does nowhere exist, and the abstract virtues do not apply to man in his concrete stations of life. Hence it has been necessary to define the lines of conduct and codes for different individuals. Ethically it looks like partitioning man's duties in reference to his station; the Hindu does not lay so much stress upon the higher and the lower duties. He emphasizes the spirit and the method of performance. This question is not only ethical, it is a question also of psychological and spiritual development. Man is composed of many forces, and since his nature is not absolutely everywhere the same, the abstract conception of perfection can have no real meaning. It may be there to indicate an intellectual and a categorical conception; but to apply it to life requires a nice discrimination of the forces that are dominant in the individual subject.

In response to the different forces functioning in man, the Hindu adjusts the values of life differentially.

The man of vital strength cannot assimilate in him the fineness of the higher mental life. The man of intellect cannot appreciate the virtue of an intuitive mind; the man of æsthetic intuition cannot assimilate in his nature the sublimities of Transcendence. The categorical determination of values is no practical help in the adjustment of life. The general concept of Dharma for all men may be the same, but the specific determination of them is a practical necessity to help the evolution of the concrete man. Individuals according to their psychic uprearing have different duties suiting different stages of life. The psychic nature determines their values as forces in society and regulates their respective functions. The performance of the duties in all the stations of life in a dutiful spirit can be the real source of our psychic purification. The Hindu emphasizes the observance of *Swadharma* (one's own duties) as really helpful and the imitation of *Para Dharma* (others' duties) as really dangerous.

The performance of Swadharma really makes us fit for finer development and progress; and the performance of our proper duties in the right spirit eases our being, establishes equilibrium in it and makes it responsive to the finer ethical forces. The normal life of man can never fix the same kind of duties for

every man, though it can urge their performance in the same spirit of dedication and selflessness. This spirit gives the key to the finer opening, and not the volume and the magnitude of the task. This spirit of cheerful acceptance of the duties of life in faith, hope and joy makes for the finer evolution of spirit, and the finer movement of our being.

And to this is added the spirit of dedication in the light of cosmic adaptation. The sense of agency which Karma implies is a narrow one, and unless this agency comes to be transformed, the finer evolution cannot take place. To this end Karma is performed in the spirit of Dharma. Social, moral and religious adaptation, as inculcated by the code or rules of Dharma, to be complete, cannot neglect all the forces of life and ignore their economy in life; wealth, health, affluence, power are also accepted as values, as helping life in its adaptation and evolution. Life in its unfoldment requires every one of them and feels their need in giving finer expression to it. Before one can really surmount the life of desires and vital urges, one requires their satisfaction to some extent, and the Hindu does not condemn them outright but guides and regulates them in such a manner as to completely transform them. The vital transfigured in the light

of the higher intuition is not an obstruction but rather a help to the better expression of life. Dharma is, therefore, the regulation of the forces to a cosmic end or purpose.

The forces of life cannot be checked or uprooted. We can, however, spiritualize them and make the whole adaptation of life spiritual. The Hindu welcomes the complete spiritualization of life, not by neglecting its natural expression, but by finding out its spiritual source and divine origin. All adaptations of life must obey the law of Dharma, which preserves the social integrity and makes for the subtler evolution of the race and the individual. Life is a great Yajña, sacrifice, in which all should take part, in order that the life's potentialities can be fully realized.

Dharma can allow us to marshal all our forces, the vital, the mental, the spiritual, and to use them for the cosmic good. Even the individual's good or happiness should be included under this, and when he makes the distinct claim, he instead of inviting a release invites a bondage of Karma. The sense of agency militates against the cosmic sense, and in place of harmony invites constant conflict. Cosmic harmony presupposes a cosmic society of Persons. The person is never in conflict with society, for he has no

interest apart from the interest of the whole which he perceives to be his being.

In the social life there is organization of values, just as in the individual life there is organization of forces; all the values have a rightful place and each one is important, inasmuch as each meets a rightful demand of our life and cannot be neglected. But in the organization of values, the right spirit should not be overlooked: none should be consecrated to self-gratification, but every one should be dedicated to self-expression.

The highest value is put upon self-expression in spirit. The lower urges of the vital-mental life are subordinate to this end, for in the last analysis the spiritual urge is realized to be the essence of our being. But the spiritual values absorb the full consideration in life. In placing Dharma before all other values of life, the Hindu places before all the dynamic character of life, for Dharma is regulation of the urges in a way conducive to the best fruition of life.

Beauty, love, power and holiness are the finer values of life. They are the natural consequences of the rightful regulation of life; they represent the values or ends which are ends for their

developing, but in reality this is true to the finite mind which is accustomed to see things and events through time. Philosophic insight helps us to see the universe in its *Sub specie Eternitatis* and appraise things in their timeless aspects. To see reality through time is not philosophy; philosophical insight enters into the heart of reality in transcendence of time. Time shows changes; Philosophy sees the changeless beyond the changes. The intuition of things through time is natural to every man, but the philosophic demand is the search after the enduring. Our perception of reality through time feels it to be an eternal possibility, but philosophy tutors us to comprehend reality beyond and above time; and this comprehension shows it to be not only an infinite creativeness but the accomplished reality. If philosophy forgoes this claim, it forgoes its profession and call. The philosophic sense and intuition, therefore, present reality in its comprehensive totality and concreteness. Changes it accepts but it integrates them into Reality, for changes are conceived in time; but when theoretic reason reasserts itself it presents the Reality transcending time and even beyond the expression of creative will. Creative will and time are associated together.

But the Vaisnavas have not totally banished time

growing fineness of our nature can only perceive and appreciate them.

The consciousness of value becomes evident as the spirit becomes free from the touch of matter. Even the values we find in nature are not nature's. They are the stamp of spirit on nature. Emergence does not bring out anything new into existence, but only makes manifest in nature what is always implicit in spirit. And a little insight into spirituality tells us that the harmonies, the beauties of the archetypal existences, are simply soul-captivating and absorbing. Values are transcendental, and their clear perception and intuition are possible if the higher reaches in spiritual consciousness be open to us. Kant was right when with the eyes of spiritual faith he could see the realm of values as an order distinct from sensible experience.

Values make their expression when will moves in its own inner harmony; will has the revelation of its true nature when it is freed from the conflicts of hypothetical imperatives. The realm of finer will can never be penetrated, unless the will can assert itself over desires and emotions. Desires and emotions are connected more or less with vital satisfaction, and naturally will, if it is associated with them, cannot

reveal its deeper self. The Vaisnavas are, therefore, correct when they say that the higher values of life belong to supramental and supra-cosmic expression of will, for these expressions are really movements in will freed from desire, and are truly spiritual. The Vaisnavas draw a distinction between the expression of the dynamic divine through nature, and the transcendent expression of dynamic divine. The former are the terrestrial movements of will which cannot really reveal will in its supra-sensuous expressions of spirit. Values reside in the soul, and unless the will exhibits the supra-cosmic movement, they cannot be truly revealed. The movement of spirit in spirit is categorically different from the cosmic movement of spirit, and hence so long as we cannot grasp the supra-mundane movement of will, we can hardly realize its true spiritual nature. Spirit has its expression, cosmic and supra-cosmic, but the cosmic expression is limited, obstructed and not spontaneous, hence it cannot exhibit its fineness, subtlety, joy and delight. The Vaisnavas attach the highest value to the free movement of spirit in spirit.

In the scheme of values, the Vaisnavas consider fellowship with the Divine as the finest. But this fellowship may be with the divine as manifesting

through history and the divine in its transcendent bliss. Anyhow the association and the fellowship with the Divine is all that is sought as the end of seeking, for it is that which really gives the elasticity of life, the fine movement, the delicacy of being which are so ardently desired. The Vaisnavas never emphasize the dynamic identification completely, for they find more delight in self-giving and in serving the Divine.

But in the scheme of values, they recognize the following kinds of realization : as nearness with, as belonging to sphere or realm of the Divine, as acquiring equality of nature, power and effulgence with Him. These forms of liberation indicate the accumulation of finer nature and greater powers, higher inspiration, more transparent being ; but these are all movements in the dynamism of Maya, not movement in the dynamism of Spirit.

Cosmic creation, cosmic regulation, cosmic powers are the working of spirit in nature, and however glorious may be our realization of spirit in its cosmic functioning, it still lacks the supra-cosmic ethereal fineness of the spirit. The Vaisnavas in laying stress upon this fineness have not really invited these kinds of realization as spiritual ends in life. Their outlook and ideal have been centred in love and not in power, for

the former exhibits spirit in its best expression. Power is the expression in reference to the cosmic functioning. Love is the expression in the realm of spirit.

The realm of love is the realm of harmony. It is the world of personal will, for without personality love is impossible.

Will, in this world, is the expression and movement of delight. In this fellowship of will there is neither purpose nor end, for will is love freed from all mazes of desires. In this height of existence Being is realized as Delight, the highest value is realized as the play and the expression of delight.

The cosmic will is centred in a supreme person, the centre and the spring of all attraction. The organization of wills must imply a convergence to a supreme will. This will is in the highest sense concrete, implying a unification with other wills. In this organization and unification of wills in the Divine, the Vaìsnavas have found the highest value. As truth, the unification of wills gives the highest existence; as delight, it gives us the exquisite Ananda; as the good, it is in the finest sense pure and supremely perfect. God is Truth, God is Beauty and God is Holy in His transcendence; God is Power in its immanence.

These spiritual values are not creations of striving; they are deeply involved in our nature, they need to be realized and manifested, they cannot newly emerge. In Vaisnavic Philosophy Truth has been reconciled with value, for Reality is dynamic. It is not only existence, but also existence that presents itself as True, Good and Beautiful.

The Tantras have introduced the impersonal movement of will in place of the personal movement in Vaisnavism. Will is the most important factor in the philosophy of the Tantras. The whole world is the play of will. The creative will evolves truth, beauty and goodness, but these are humanistic and relative ends; and so far as the human will has its stirring, it can desire many forms of ends. But the more the will is educated, the more it feels that the movement of the transcendental will has no definite aim, though at times it appears that the Transcendent will realizes some ends. But really it is not so: the spatial and the temporary perspective of life on the terrestrial plane interpret the movement of the divine will in this way, for it understands the dynamic divine as personal. Ends can have meaning and value from the personal viewpoint. And it is indeed the common way of thinking that the divine will can satisfy all

the demands of our being; for the Divine is personal and super-personal. In its personal aspect it is represented as creative, and as redeeming and corresponding to them the human mind conceives worldly and spiritual values, and demands their satisfaction from the Divine. The Tantras even concede spiritual powers consequent on the identification of wills, human and divine and the emergence of fine being, subtle creative power and divine fellowship.

The dynamic identification can elevate man from human agency to divine fellowship and agency, and fill him with all the beatitude of the divine life. To be like God in knowledge and power has been the object of search always amongst men. But the Tantras show a still higher spiritual outlook. A dynamic identification directs the insight into finer channels and exhibits the impersonal expression of the transcendental will. Will as personal is shadowed in this transcendent will and elevates our outlook from the world of relative values to the world of absolute Truth. Values are formed where the will takes the personal form and shape, but the super-personal will elevates us from the realm of Value to the realm of Truth.

Values may be human or divine, for they are associated with the creative expression of will, and in

that way may be immanent in the creative divinity, but not in the absolute Siva. The world of human or divine will is a limited and divided expression of the transcendental will. Religion as the exercise of personal will is confined within the realm of relative values. But the absolute Truth transcends the personal relationship between the human and the divine.

The Tantras have gone beyond the ordinary conception of spiritual life because they recognize the transcendent character of Siva-Sakti. In other words, in the Tantric approach metaphysics have a higher place than religion as ordinarily understood. In this aspect the Tantras demonstrate a tendency contrary to the modern outlook in science where value is reasserting its claims as a finer and higher category than Truth. And it is natural; for, in science, space, time and energy are the triune Absolute. But in the Tantras, behind the Transcendent Will and in association with it, are the Transcendent Being and luminous super-personal consciousness. Hence wisdom saves from delusion and ignorance. This value may not be pragmatic as understood in the ordinary sense. Such pragmatism is really spiritual pragmatism, for it gives us the sublime sense of freedom from the relative outlook on life.

The impersonal Will exhibits to the yearning soul its own impersonal nature and gives it the seal of freedom from the personal play of life and Sakti by installing him in the silent luminous consciousness which is Siva.

From the aspect of will, the Tantras are anxious to merge will into will-less bliss by the help of will. This tendency of will is called Vidya, as its tendency to creation is called Avidya. Will is the principle of individualization, will is the principle of spiritual progress and values, and, finally, will is the Vidya. Will can move the cosmos, will can exhibit the finest creation in love, beauty and power, and finally will can release us from the world of relative values and reveal the will-less bliss in Transcendence.

The Vedanta of Samkara has made this distinction very clear and has carried it to a philosophical conclusion. Values are true of the personal will. They are ideals of progress and development, and especially in spiritual life they represent the forces that work out our progress and fineness. But this does not mean that new ideals emerge into existence or that a higher and a new order of existence and truth is set before us. These values are potential in spiritual life, and spiritual evolution means that the potential becomes the actual.

It may be a progress in fineness and subtlety of being, but not in the sense of a new growth or a sudden emergence. And it is progress, because life is released from its grossness and inelasticity. Progress is really the easing of life from crude sense and crude satisfaction and its response to the finer rhythm and harmonies.

Samkara recognizes two kinds of Mukti—redemption: (i) indirect, (ii) direct. The indirect consists in this growth of fineness, brightness and brilliance in spirituality which covers intellectual insight, capability of love and free movement of will. But Mukti, even in this form, is not merely appreciative responsiveness to Truth, or the æsthetic appreciation of beauty, or the finer perfection in holiness.

Mukti really means the overstepping of the finite sense and feeling freely the identification with God, the God who controls and regulates the order of existence and the order of values. Samkara is fond of emphasizing the identity in Transcendence or even in immanence between the Divine and the human; and, therefore, even when the soul has to make its progress through finer realms of existence, it must necessarily appreciate the free causality of spirit, either in the Divine or in the human, and the more the man can realize his dynamic identity, the more he can feel in

himself a nature akin to God; the true value even here is to be like God. The causality of will is free causality; the indirect Mukti lies in absorbing and assimilating this free causality. In this aspect Samkara is superior to Kant. Kant recognizes free causality of will and develops the conception of society as a kingdom of ends. Kant could not see the truth of the identity of wills, human and divine, for he could not feel the identity of being.

The Vedantic identification of wills could make the finite will move with the intensity and force of the infinite will, and could invest it with all the wealth and power of its existence.

Kant's vision could not go beyond the conception of society as the fellowship of wills and God is invoked to seal the union of happiness and virtues. Samkara invites the cosmic dance of life in harmony with the divine life, not by denying human will, but by elevating and assimilating it to the Divine. With such assimilation, he could forgo the ends of finite and personal wills and could envisage the universe from the standpoint of the divine will, and its immanence and activity through all spheres of existence. The divine will is more super-personal than personal. When our will is merged into it, a new chapter of

realization opens before us, and we can move cosmically, and realize the fineness and the meaning of divine will as expressed in earth and heaven. It really makes us sources of power, instead of weakness—centres of infinite wisdom, love, power and delight.

This identification of will makes the finite centre vibrate with the infinite force and light, and man becomes a divine man in direct touch with the Divine. Such men have no individual purpose, no individual seeking. They enjoy the divine life in the cosmos, the divine life transcending the cosmos. They become free from the domination of personal ends and personal wills, the creation of Avidya, and move in the supra-personal light and life. In other words, they enjoy the supra-personal life in the Divine. Since they are freed from all personal demands, they are free from Karma in the usual sense of the word. The Divine works through them. They enjoy the freshness, the magnitude and the transparence of divine life. Such free souls cannot interfere in the cosmic creation or take any part in it, for this aspect of life is entirely reserved to the divine will in its creativeness.* When

* Causality of Will has a two-fold function: (i) primary, (ii) secondary. The primary function is exhibited in creation, destruction; the secondary function is exhibited in the regula-

the human will becomes free of its personal chord and touch, it works in unison with the divine will in its manifestation of finer spirituality, wisdom and Ananda. This kind of liberation attains its finest when the finite will is in constant fellowship and touch with the Divine : a complete identification is not quite possible so long as the self retains its finite nature; and the dynamic identification can absorb the infinite life in us, and in the finite background can exhibit the finer opening in knowledge and wisdom.

Dynamic identification cannot ever be complete, for such identification always presupposes the distinction of the human and the Divine.

Indirect redemption may make us free from the changing sense of time, but cannot altogether free us from the time-sense, because it sees life as expressing itself through time. In this lofty height time may not be the condition of changes and transformations, but time is still the condition of concrete spiritual expression. But Samkara had the genius to conceive the direct redemption or emancipation. And it is found possible, not by seeking the identification of will, but by realizing the identity of being. Will is the indication

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tion of cosmic affairs. The transformed human will can take active part in the latter, but not in the former.

of the concrete being; but being is transcendent, it has its absolute nature, and, as absolute, it allows in itself no division of the finite and the infinite. The Absolute is truly free, for its being is not circumscribed by anything. It is freedom in the sense of Eternal Present, for it is the unchanging locus in the changing panorama of life. This locus refuses all the divisions of the relative life and is the true freedom of Existence. It is not free will, but free and unrestricted being. Samkara supposes that unless one can put off the habit of looking through space and time, one cannot have the direct realization of the freedom of self. Self is free existence beyond time and space, and such self is one integral existence.

Such self is indeed different from the one that is moulding, formative and creative. The latter is empirical self working through space and time, the former is transcendent beyond the creative ego of will and the logical ego of the subject. When both the concentrations are transcended we realize the self or the subject as Freedom, neither projecting as a subject, nor creating as a will. This realization gives us the taste of Absolute Freedom. The finest existence is this freedom, for the highest truth is here beyond the phantasmagoria of the senses and the

creations of the will. It frees us from the complexities of life and gives us that which is also the envy of the angels and the gods. This requires philosophic wisdom and philosophic discrimination, which finally endow us with the sense of the Eternal. When the active and the receptive nature of our being stand in complete equilibrium the intimations of the free being become clear.

"We do not belong," as Underhill truly remarks, "to the world of succession alone. Deeply immersed though our lives may seem to be in that world of succession, we are yet able to know the unchanging."

VIII

COSMIC MAN

Hinduism, in following the fine metaphysical vision of the one being as the background and support of life, conceives Man as the Cosmic Man. Divinity is one. Humanity is one. Man is the reflection of God. He is spirit in flesh, struggling to give concrete expression to Divinity in its unfolding through individual, family and society.

Man is the representative of God on earth, man not as an individual, but as cosmic man. What is cosmic man? It is the concrete humanity which pulsates through everybody, which is active in every centre as the spark of the divine life. The divinity is not far off. It is here. It is in us. The cosmic man is the divinity immanent in humanity. Man is not merely human. He is potentially divine. Hinduism refuses to accept the natural origin of man. Humanity is a descent of the Divinity on earth, it is not an emergence out of nature, it is not nature's product.

The Divine is all ; but its immanence in spirit is evident in man. Man is not a sinner by birth, he has indeed suffered no fall; for creation is a necessity to manifest the beauty, the holiness and the majesty of

the Divine. Man, so far from being a sinner, is a prince in spirit. He is the son of God in the true sense of the term. His limitation is his handicap: this limitation comes from the eccentric urge of the divine nature; creation implies self-imposed limitation and projection. To be self-conscious is to be limited. To be a person is to invite an orientation in space and time. Indeed there is more a restriction of consciousness than a spiritual or moral fall. Spirit is our essence. The restriction confines our vision. If there is restriction, there is the constant urge in man to break it to realize his cosmic nature. If this is not possible in flesh, it is possible in spirit.

Life through society helps this expression. The social nature of man is indicative of his cosmic nature. The true man does not come out because of his inherent ignorance which creates a false individuality. It always tries to break it by its own urges. Nature even refuses this false individuality. The father and the son are not only the emblem of a spiritual truth. They are an expression of the spiritual truth on nature's plane. Nature is the reflection of spirit.

The idea of the cosmic man is a great picture that we get from the Vedas. The Vedas speak of a cosmic federation of Gods and men, embraced by

the Divine. The sages saw the myriads of gods beyond men, God beyond gods and beyond God His ineffable Absolute nature.

The seers see ranges of existence, ranges of life beyond life, mind beyond mind, and the supramental beyond the mental, the Absolute beyond the supramental. All life is a federation of spirits united and integrated in the Absolute.

This insight makes it possible to see and feel the integrity of humanity. Humanity is not a detached existence, but is surrounded by forces and life that make impress upon it from all sides. In a rare vision Arjuna catches glimpses of this eternal humanity in the divine. If humanity is included in the divine federation of angels and gods, spirit and nature, it in itself also represents a spiritual federation of races and tribes. In this federation, the individuals are not atomic existences separated from the whole; they are the points where the life and the voice of the whole become vocal. Their individuality is the creation of ignorance, their universality is their spirit. In fact, society is the living spiritual institution, for the social voice is the voice of God through humanity. Society cannot be irresponsive to its divine nature; the more social consciousness is finely awake, the more it mani-

fests the divine life, for it throbs in a divine impulse. The social man is man indeed. This is the cosmic man.

This sublimation of Man into a Cosmic Man really enables Hindu society to invite and absorb all into its fold, for it never loses sight of the Truth of the cosmic federation. The great Teachers of Hinduism have contributed freely to its development. Avatars, inspired agents and Truth-seers have all been absorbed in the vision of the cosmic man.

Hinduism as a social system has claimed many illumined teachers and inspired agents, but none of them have taken the place of Cosmic Man. Every one has been marked out as great, but the allegiance of admiration has been to no one exclusive, and even when this allegiance has been made to them, they are looked upon as revealing the Truth of the cosmic humanity which is greater than any single teacher. Vyasa, Buddha, Samkara, Caitanya—all have been the expressions of the Cosmic Man.

The Hindu accepts the right and possibility of every man being inspired and serving society, but this inspiration makes him feel all the more his representing the Eternal life and Truth of Humanity.

But the cosmic man has his gospel in the revelation direct through God, or indirect through Man.

The former gives us the divine Gospel, the Vedas, the latter, the inspired teaching of the Sastras. The inspired sayings have a personal touch, the Vedas are quite impersonal. No authorship of the Vedas is possible, either human or divine. The divinity is identified with the Vedas, revealing as they do the wisdom inherent in it. Divinity is wisdom, sapientia is divinity. And this wisdom is revealed in the Vedas. The Vedas are eternal, just as the divinity is eternal. If the Vedas command our reverence by their hoariness and by their sacredness, the sayings and the writings of the inspired agents carry conviction because of their proceeding from a supramental source.

The human mind can at times rise to finer penetration and knowledge, and can draw from the reservoir of direct knowledge and immediate vision. Such knowledge is accepted as higher than popular and scientific knowledge, for it is really an impress from the cosmic mind. This impress proceeds from finer intuitions of the soul, but they are more convincing if they fall in with the revelations of the Vedas. The Hindu finds in the Vedas the shining truths, and hence is anxious to affiliate the future intuitions of the race to the eternal truth of the Vedas.

This spirit of cohesiveness in the realm of Truth

has its influence upon cohesiveness in society. It has given Hinduism a liberalism and a conservatism, equally unique. The Hindu is liberal in the sense that he can accept truths from anybody, from any teacher; but at the same time he is conservative in the sense that these truths are to be affiliated to the body of Truths already received and assimilated. He is guided by the conviction that Truth is the possession not of individuals but of cosmic man. A teacher, a prophet, however great, makes obeisance to this spirit. Sri Krisna says that the Truth that he gives out is nothing new.

Truth is eternal. It sleeps in the bosom of Divinity. One is only to know it and give it out. None is too great before cosmic man. The concrete man is greater than individuals, however great.

Some of the revelations give us the law of Dharma; others, of emancipation and Moksa. Dharma regulates and exhibits the path of progress; Moksa, of the final illumination. The former gives us the finer potentialities of the soul, and endows us with radiant dynamism and psychic fineness, indicating moral fitness and spiritual progress. But man's spiritual realization cannot be complete unless he can shake off his ignorance completely and realize the identity of the human

and the Divine, the Cosmic Man is the cosmic consciousness reflected in Man.

The Cosmic Man is beautifully described in the Vedas. Original classes are integrated in the cosmic man. The Brahman represents the head, the Kshatriya the arms, the Vaisya the thigh, the Sudra, the feet. In the dynamism of social life they serve individual functions to meet the divergent needs of society. They keep up the efficiency of social life and its equilibrium and harmony. None can do without the others, for in the economy of social life each has a place and a function which others cannot perform. The Brahmans represent the intellectual mind of society, the Kshatriyas the intellectual and the vital mind, the Vaisyas the vital life and the Sudras the physical life of the society. The Sudra has the least illumination, he has naturally a place and function subordinate to the rest; the Vaisya represents the vital-breath of social life, and his function is to supply to the needs of the vital body of the society. The Kshatriya with his dominant rajas backed up by an illumination in Sattva is fit to be the organizing and regulating centre of the forces composing society. The Brahman with his higher illumination of Sattvic intelligence can reflect better the finer forces composing life and is,

therefore, given the highest place in the social integration and the finest function of being teacher and instructor. The Brahman can inspire, but his inspiration can be put into action by the Kshatriya who can catch it by his Sattvic penetration and put it into deed by his Rajasic impulse. The Brahman imparts fine psychic influence which is given a practical shape and form by the Kshatriya. In the realism of actual life, these divisions are necessary and natural. They are different types, introverted and extroverted. These together keep up the spiritual and material efficiency of social life. All types are important in their own way and their absorption into one another cannot be instrumental to social economy.

But a too realistic emphasis lends to our losing the elastic nature of life in society and the fluidity of life itself, and puts us in danger of passing into a rigid and formal social constitution. It introduces a statical conception of the social types instead of their dynamical and functional conception. And society suffers in the cosmical outlook which is at once its life and its inspiration. An inferior or a superior complexity may retard the vision and keep away the Truth of concrete man, and instead of vitalizing the social self may contribute to its debilitation. The

superior types should be the natural leaders, but unless they preserve freshness of life and elasticity of vision, naturally the qualities which fit them for the higher social purpose will die out, and they will lose vitality and become merely formal. And life demands constant reorganization. For what is necessary is to make society so keen about the higher intuition and values that it must give them a superior place, no matter whence they come. If this power of finer selection and free adaptation is denied in any society, it becomes barren and its inspiration and energies dry up. The types must not then be rigidly fixed. Nature offers the best guidance. This rigidity takes place because ultimately the finer vision of the cosmic man and its concrete (and not its collective) nature is forgotten. The emphasis which is so often laid upon Sattvic purity and the transparence of the particular types, often overlooks the fact that nature generally does not reserve her beauties for any particular class. The psychic nature of man is elastic : it can develop; it can also degenerate.

Nature keeps up her types, but the classes or individuals may change. With this free possibility of adaptation, the Hindu emphasizes the aristocracy of character; aristocracy of birth is accepted as

contributing to aristocracy of character. For blood has force. Inheritance is power. This is indeed scientific, but a too much stress upon it overlooks the finer dynamism of character and spirituality which in its nature is incalculable and indeterminate. The finest rose blossoms in a bush of thorns, the lotus in a pool of stagnant water. Nature is indeed miraculous in her ways. The Hindus do not overlook these variations in nature. Hence they accept two types of Brahmins: Brahmins by birth and Brahmins by adaptation.

When the aristocracy of character is combined with the aristocracy of birth, the finest in form and in essence is attained. But the true aristocracy of life does not deny a fine spiritual communism. The finer inspiration reveals that life is one. Vedantic inspiration keeps up the spirit of commonalty; the actualities of life recognize the spiritual, moral and intellectual heirarchy. The Hindu social order represents the synthesis of these tendencies.

The vision of the cosmic man does not lose sight of the elasticity of the social organism; the actualities of life keep us cognized of the natural hierarchy of types in the social order. The scheme intellectually is perfect, though in practice it has favoured exclu-

siveness and segregation by making the classes permanent and by claiming birth to be the main determining social force.

But the truth lies in recognizing the possibility of these types absorbing the higher values in purity and transparence and becoming free from time-begotten rigidities, and in admitting to the higher status of life the types exhibiting fine inspiration and spiritual dynamism. In fact, Hinduism exhibits a finer appreciative instinct of the higher human values. The Hindu readily accepts inspiration and guidance even from the people of lower ranks in social life.

The Hindu society still retains its faith in the Varnāsrama Dharma, finding it natural as well as spiritual. Its naturalness comes from the functional divisions of life, its spirituality comes from the recognition of the finer law of life to work not for self but for the social organization. Each man's duty is sacred, if it is done with an eye to the preservation of social equilibrium and efficiency, for spirituality is above all responsiveness to wider life.

The social duties are done not in the spirit of unavoidable necessity, but in that of joyful acceptance. Man's centre of spirituality is the heart. If

the heart works in a spirit of joy and spontaneous awareness of the commonalty of life, it has its spiritual growth. When the heart is open, man becomes the recipient of the finest blessings of life. The heart is the centre of spiritual intuition. With joyousness, it receives the silent impress of spirit within.

Hinduism emphasizes more this elasticity of heart which can develop not by the finer intellectual perception of relations, but by the openness of being; and the Varnāsrama Dharma allocates duties appropriate to the station and status of life and the capacities of individuals. It insists upon the finer perception of the solidarity of society and the ready acceptance of the duties as sacred and as allowing a finer channel of growth and outpouring in spirituality. It is indeed a great social construction based upon the finer perception of society as a spiritual institution. Where this finer vision of the cosmic man is not present, where the heart does not throb in with the beatings of spirit, such a structure cannot be living and stands every chance of disintegration. The Hindu gives the sanction of the Vedas, but that sanction cannot long carry conviction unless there is the spiritual perception of the sacredness of life and of the equal

necessity of the composing social types and their finer integration in the social unity. The caste rigidity is not Varnāsrama Dharma. The one kills, the other elevates. If the ideal is great, its demand in life and intuition is very high.

To-day the Varnāsrama Dharma is less in evidence than the dominance of the castes. Hinduism is integral in name, but divided in inspiration. Everybody lives for the caste, but not for the whole, which Varnāsrama demands.

But the natural divisions of the Varnāsrama Dharma are rightly denied in the last stage of life, where the cosmic vision generated in the former stages finds its full expression in the fourth stage, for life is here completely spiritual and the Sattvic transparence reflects the whole life as one and identical. The man in the fourth stage is free from all the touch of life in society and family. Life's currents are here fine and genial, and spiritual luminosity reflects the reality of the cosmic man. The concentration, which is a practical necessity and limitation in social life, is not present in his case. He is moved by finer instinct and wider vision, and lives in that spirit and for that consummation.

Life reveals a universal harmony when it grows in fineness, but this harmony of life cannot be enjoyed unless the seeking spirit is free from the realistic concentration. The man who enjoys it walks easily amongst mankind. It is free from limitation of actual life. Such life is superior to the finest type of the social divisions. He is the Sannyasi, the renunciator deep in love, cosmic in affection, and transcendent in vision. The Vaisnavas say that the true Vaisnava is superior to everybody by his catholicity and fine spirituality. In fact, the Hindu aspires in his life to go beyond the actual and invite the spirit of appraising the whole existence in the light, freshness and Ananda of the divine life. The blessed combination of idealism and realism in life has characterized the formation of the Hindu social structure. Buddhism does not recognize the realistic instinct in man and affirms the complete idealistic outlook. Buddha has the dream of inviting and guiding all humanity to the blessed Peace of Nirvana. Bodhisattva is love. He sacrifices his own consummation in blessed peace for the elevation, purification and final liberation of humanity.

Buddhism is a great inspiration to cosmic life with complete light. It sees nothing hopeful and

inspiring in actual life. Hinduism sees the dignity of life as it proceeds from light. It recognizes the actualities of life and synthesizes the values of life. But it also lays the finest stress on Transcendence as the culmination of life's seeking and progress. Hinduism recognizes the value of the creative force in life simultaneously with the value of the redemptive urge, accepting both as spiritual. Buddhism accepts the latter only as spiritual. In Hinduism life's urge is in every way spiritual; only the need is that we should recognize it as such. Hence all the forces of life have been given their rightful place and none of them has been denied; every one of them has been transfigured and spiritualized in the setting of the cosmic life.

Life is sacred in its source, it is sacred in its play, it has fine harmony and deep melody. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, can see it and hear it. Blessed are those that are helping to establish the divine peace on earth as it is in heaven. The teachers of thought and action should take their inspiration from almost the lost page of life.

Hinduism believes in this cosmic spiritual fraternity of souls and angels as the real living society which can occasionally issue its grace into the human

being and can unconsciously and mysteriously work for the good of humanity. Few may receive this inspiration from the height. But they are the living Christs on earth.

IX

RAM MOHAN AND THE NEW ERA

The epoch of modern Hinduism begins with Rājā Ram Mohan Roy. Ram Mohan starts the new spirit of the age. He was born at a time when Hinduism had lost its fervour, pride and power and was following customs and traditions somewhat blindly. Ram Mohan marks the beginning of a new revival in culture, in social reform and in religious awakening. His spirit was essentially the spirit of a reformer who could clearly see the needs of his age and supply the formative spirit for new constructions. He was essentially a builder. He came to fulfil and not to destroy.

He saw the new signs of the times, the concentration of all races and cultures in India. And the future India he visualized was not the India of the Hindus, but the India of cosmic humanity. He envisaged that the peace and the prosperity of the land depended upon a wide outlook on life and the receptive spirit which could trace the beauties of every

civilization and conceive a fine synthesis of them based upon intuitions. The mutual responsiveness and sympathy which religion should awaken in man has often failed to work in the history of the world, when the fine inspiration that draws it forward is lost. Ram Mohan was the new messiah of a new age carrying with him the vision of a humanity embraced in ties of spiritual fellowship.

Ram Mohan's message had importance for civilization, but it had a very special importance for the land of his birth. The genius of Hinduism lies in supplying a ready synthesis of the new forces with the old ones. Hinduism has its conservatism, but it is a conservatism that has a wonderful integrating power.

Conservatism keeps up the spirit of continuity, but does not oppose that adaptability which the life of a nation requires. Conservatism maintains the values that are really essential, adaptability brings in changes that are positively beneficial. Such is the spirit of Hinduism. This spirit becomes once again reasserted in the life of Ram Mohan Roy. Hindu society apparently shows a statical structure, but the fountain of its life is not dried up, and even to-day we can see creative movements in all spheres of life.

When Hindu society was really being suffocated by the pressure of the new spiritual forces of Islam and Christianity from outside, and by a narrowness nurtured in ignorance from within, Ram Mohan Roy appeared on the scene with a message that instilled new vigour into his own society and as well could help humanity to a better understanding of the faiths of the world. He was the messenger of Peace and Life, not for India alone, but for the human federation.

But what was the secret of his power? It was not merely the intellectual grasp and apprehension of the fundamental teachings of the different religions apart from their ceremonials and rituals, but the fine intuition of their vitalizing influences.

Ram Mohan Roy was not merely an intellectual force, but a great spiritual genius. His being was responsive to the fine living currents of the spiritual faiths. He could see the inherent beauties of their teaching and longed to build up a synthesis of the finest and most vital elements of all religions. If faiths are really saving, no faith has completely failed. Ram Mohan Roy had the spiritual insight to see this. The great service of Ram Mohan Roy lay in making followers of faith conscious of *their vital elements*. He culled the fine flowers of spiritual knowledge and

intuition from among the foliage of religion and composed them into a bouquet which could be enjoyed by all alike. This was possible for him, not because he was a great intellectual, but because he had in him the finer spiritual receptivity which could be immediately responsive to all the beauties of life.

Humanity is a great stream pouring forth from within the beauties embosomed in the Divine, and the different civilizations raised on the inspirations of prophets were to Ram Mohan the visible expression of the infinite ways of the divine life. Humanity is the finest book of revelation of the Divine, and, therefore, to Ram Mohan the literatures of humanity, especially those that spring from the flowers of the race, had a deep meaning.

Ram Mohan considered the Hindu inspiration to be essentially dominating in knowledge. He was attracted by the finer transcendence and synthetic unity of the Vedantic Brahman; here he could find something which could ease life by its elastic conception and emancipation from all narrowness that naturally originates when our being is not sufficiently open both intellectually and spiritually. Ram Mohan could find in the Vedantic literature the boldness and the uniqueness of approach, for it rises beyond the temporal

considerations of life and finds absorbing gratification in the serenity of Transcendent Truth.

If Hinduism appealed to him by philosophical ingenuity and spiritual transcendence, Christianity appealed to him by its charity and love and the social integration which is based upon them. Ram Mohan found in Christianity a fine opening into the spiritual devotion, fellowship and fraternity of men. The silent sensitiveness to the softness of being and its expression in divine love and charity in Christianity attracted him intensively. In Islam he could read the sense of the divine government of the world and the unalterable equality of men.

But Ram Mohan was eager to synthetize these eternal ideas and types of cultures into a unity that would embrace all in a natural fusion, for they are expressions of life and can naturally fit in a comprehensive vision of life. And the troubles of humanity arise more from the side-views of life, especially when these pass for the full Truth. Humanity is open, but not sufficiently open to the currents of the infinite to see, estimate and realize the beauties and the dignities of the varied expressions of life. Ram Mohan's attempt was to find a rationale that could embrace them all. His being was finely attuned to the Vedantic

ideal, for in it he could find the satisfaction of the soul in its aspiration after the highest wisdom and knowledge. The vision of God as Power or as Love enraptures the soul, but the abiding Peace is given in Wisdom. Ram Mohan could not break from this spiritual tradition of the Hindus and the fine intuition which they display when they conceive the idea of an affinity of being and a kinship of man with God. There is a charm in the conception of the *civitas dei* peopled by redeemed souls, and surely a finer conception of redemption lies in exhibiting the essential similarity and identity between man and God. Theism in Ram Mohan has its final appeal there. Love and Power have appeal to the human heart and will, and Knowledge to the deep abyss of the soul—where the soul crosses the finer life currents and is installed in the majesty of being. The human soul no longer exhibits its helplessness, but manifests its security in unity with Brahman.

Ram Mohan follows the highest ideal prevalent amongst the Vaisnavas, for he affiliates the human soul to the Divine and secures for it a fellowship with the Divinity. The soul enjoys the divine majesty and sweetness and, in synthetic vision, the totality of existence is assimilated in the Divine. Life has triune expression in

delight, consciousness and existence, and the more the human spirit is affiliated in knowledge to the Divine, as it is in being, the more it can have the ease of movement and plasticity of life. Thus it is better fitted to realize that the human and the Divine are not separate and that humanity is not totally helpless, for it enjoys the protection of the Divine. The synthetic apprehension and the cosmic intuition can see the play of the Divine in nature, its immanence in the finite spirit and its transcendence in its luminous expression in consciousness and delight.

Ram Mohan was fond of the transcendent realization of the movement of the Divine in itself, for it expresses the plenitude of reality and affords the utmost expansion of being, through the unrestricted movement of life in this height of existence. Life exhibits this tendency in its finest flowering, and the human soul enjoys the harmony, divine in its supra-cosmic expression. And this the soul, unfettered from ignorance, enjoys as truly the centre of its hopes, the spring of its life and as that from which it was never separate and never distant.

The wide catholicity of his Hindu instinct must have helped the Rājā in the speedy reception and assimilation of the vital truths of the other religions. A

Hindu is truly a cosmopolitan in ideas and thought, if not in adaptation. Ram Mohan could welcome the gospels of other religions in this catholic spirit. And Hinduism has in it so many phases of thought and life that an intimate acquaintance with the classical literature of the Hindus must surely dispel the nervousness that one often encounters in approaching a new vision of Truth, a new adjustment in life. Ram Mohan's easy responsiveness to the vital teachings of other religions must have been due to his appreciation of the catholic teachings of the Hindus and his wide reading of Hindu literature.

Ram Mohan's interest in religion was not merely academical. He lived it. Here is the true force of his character. It has been said that he went through Tantric and Vedantic disciplines to prepare himself for direct spiritual knowledge. Life and Philosophy in Indian teachers have never been separate; indeed their philosophy is the intellectual reflection of their life, and this alone explains why Indian teachers of the first rank are always creative and moving. Ram Mohan was no exception to this rule. His virility, his catholic outlook initiated finer currents in social life, and he could influence a fine

reconstruction of social life and could free it from undue stiffness and rigidity.

Ram Mohan was fond of the worship of Brahman through Vedic Gāyatri. In it he as well as Devendranath found the finest saving grace and illuminating power, for it indicates the unity of the cosmic soul as symbolized in the sun and the individual spirit as throbbing in the heart.

The transparent thought and being which it originates could feel the unity of the oversoul and the individual soul. Ram Mohan had so deep a faith in the potentiality of Gāyatri that he inculcates its culture as the finest and the easiest method of realizing the highest Beatitude in Wisdom and Ananda.

Ram Mohan emphasized the concentration of thought and spirit on the identity of the individual and the cosmic soul, which gradually engrafts the wisdom, the elasticity, and the holiness of the Divine upon us. (Dissertation on Gāyatri).

It is also told of him that he did immense Tapas on the lines of the Tantras and the Upanisads and finally received the illumined vision of the Truth propounded in them. Ram Mohan was a revivalist and a reformer. He was not satisfied unless he could realize

the dynamical values of the truths laid down in the spiritual texts.

But he did not accept the traditional interpretation always, and found out that all the texts adore the Supreme Being and not gods and goddesses. Ram Mohan Roy did his best to establish our belief in and reverence to the supreme spirit, and dispensed with the orthodox method of worshipping the gods. He pinned his faith to the supreme Creator. Says the Rājā: "None of the celestial gods can be inferred from the various assertions of the Vedas, because the Vedas prove nothing but the unity of the supreme Being." But the Rājā never claimed himself to be the first "discoverer of the unity of Godhead." He was content to point out that the system of idol worship is "quite inconsistent with the real import of their [Hindu] scriptures."

The Hindus, perhaps, were never the worshippers of idols as idols. It will be true to say the ideals are worshipped in the idols; and that the main dynamic spiritual influence is imparted by the Sabda, the uncreate sound.

The outer symbol only deepens the inner understanding, and when the initiate has developed his psychic consciousness, the idol falls from his mind, and

the seeker moves in the finer realm of ideas with finer psychic and spiritual experience. The esoteric teachings reveal a psychological truth in idol worship. The Hindu has carried science and art into spirituality and has tried to stimulate drooping faith by discovering the psychic forces that can truly help the seeker on the path.

Ram Mohan did great service in giving a rude shock and a challenge to the prevalent Hinduism which in the long run could help the true estimate and valuation of the forces and eliminate the false and the apparent and the popular from the truly deep-rooted and scientifically verifiable truths of the Hindu system of worship. The greatest curse of idol worship is that it often confines our outlook to the sense-mind, and it does not lead us to the finer currents of the soul if it is not backed by the philosophical illumination and psychic wisdom which it should presuppose.

Ram Mohan must have been pained by the rigidity of Hindu life in every way, and he upheld the dignity of man as man by denouncing all social divisions and appropriation of rights after it. Ram Mohan was truly great in liberating life from the rigidities of social customs and the oppression of

heirarchies. He threw open the sacred literatures to every fold in society and had the spirit of modernism in him to challenge the aristocracy of birth by the aristocracy of character.

Ram Mohan was the messenger of a new social construction and the fusion of social forces. The vision of one God untarnished by the traditions of the ages enabled him to envisage the one humanity with the freedom of intermixing and interfusion.

Ram Mohan saw the foundation of the integral humanity in the invisible Church of God established in the hearts of men. It is illumined by the revelations of God embodied in the scriptures of all ages and nations. If religion is after integration, true integration requires a new gospel, which is to be created by assimilating the fundamentals of every faith and by rejecting the accretions of ages. New humanity requires new ties of fusion, and this had been long foreseen by the Rājā. The Rājā foresaw the universal Church of Humanity. And that the forces of life are pressing to that direction is clearly visible.

Ram Mohan left his inspiration to Devendranath who formally established the theistic church conceived in the universal spirit. Devendranath had a fine intuitive soul which invested his teachings with an

appealing freshness. The soul of Devendranath sought constant fellowship with God and he passed the greater part of his time in prayer and communion. His being was so keen for the constant touch with God that most of his time was passed in solitude in silent seeking.

Devendranath was a living figure of faith and of communion. But this communion had not the least touch of emotionalism, he never allowed himself to indulge in feeling. He enjoyed the serene silence in the depth of devotion. It was the union (yoga), more in spirit than in mind. Devotion may begin with its soft touch upon our emotional being, but it goes straight to the finer layers of the soul and seals the union of souls in spirit. There was no ripple in his being, which was calm, sedate and attentive to the demands of life in all its phases. Devendranath reminds us of the Rishis of yore in his calm responsiveness to the finer intuitions of spirit in his soul and in all the varied expressions of life.

The union or yoga in the recesses of being without loss of equilibrium characterizes the spirituality of Devendranath. The opening in finer spirit together with wakeful vigilance to the concrete facts of life characterized his nature. He was true to the kindred points of heaven and home. This co-mingling of an

intuitive mind with an active being singled him out as a great Rishi.

Devendranath combined in himself an intuitive and a rational mind. He did not exhibit the credulous nature of the ardent believer. He examined the tenets of faith before he could accept them. The spirit of challenge which Ram Mohan had in him is shared by Devendranath; but Devendranath had his natural gift, *i.e.*, his intuitive power. In it he had the fine manifestation of himself. The affirmations of reason were not for him mere philosophical conclusions, they were living truths. And they could become living because he realized them in the intuitive mind. Devendranath's being was essentially indrawn, and in the depth of communion he used to enjoy the fundamental truths enfolded within the soul.

And what are these fundamental truths? They are embodied in the Upanisads. The highest being is the True, the Beautiful and the Good. It is consciousness and delight. Truth has two aspects: an aspect in itself, in its being, where it is perfect puissance, complete and integral in itself; and an aspect in its expression, where it is ineffable Ananda, and immortal bliss.

The seeking soul glimpses this delight of life, and the more responsive he becomes to the currents of Ananda expressed in nature and spirit, the more easily he gains access into the heart of Being. A communion with the Divine in its Beauty and Ananda calms the restless being and consecrates the union where the soul enjoys the transcendent aspect of Divinity in its Sivahood, *i.e.*, Goodness, Truth and Oneness.

Truth gives the supreme serenity of being, Goodness, the supreme perfection. It is not exactly the perfection of the powers sleeping in the soul. Perfection represents its completeness and uniqueness. Perfection is its being, delight is its expression.

The place of Keshab in the Brahmo-Samaj movement is great. Keshab had a receptive soul. He had the spirit of constant communion of Devendranath. Ram Mohan built up his faith upon an intellectual basis. Keshab's appeal was direct and through life. The need of an intellectual understanding and philosophical systematization cannot arise in the case of the soul living constantly in the fountain of inspiration, and in Keshab's case intellect was subordinated to intuition and of him it is said that whenever any subtle problem was put to him, he could immediately solve it in the moment of inspira-

tion. Keshab had a fine spiritually plastic being, and he used to draw his conclusions from direct revelations.

His whole art of life was intense and long-continued prayer, and in prayer he could find the perennial light and the transparent life. He used to give himself up to the living inspiration, and to live in the radiance of faith.

Keshab had varieties of mood like all spiritual men, and these moods proceeded from the spiritual centres in the different layers of his being. His being was essentially devotional, and a devotional being exhibits more varied phases of spirituality than intellectual being. The devotional being is completely given up to the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God when it descends upon man exhibits more phases of being than is otherwise possible; phases which are sometimes suppressed by the weight of conventions, which sometimes cannot be manifested because of the insufficiently responsive being in man. Intellect has not that fine penetration which proceeds from life, devotion and sympathy. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Keshab spoke of varied experiences of the soul, from consciousness of sin to burning faith and communion with God.

Keshab had at times the *sense of sin*. He suffered from it, as did Christ. The more the divine

nature begins to assert itself in man, the greater becomes the consciousness of sin, and the harder becomes the struggle. Man has a gross nature and with spiritual awakening the gross nature fights desperately to maintain its ground and the seeking soul in such trials of life clings to God. Such a consciousness is a commonplace with the mystics. And in the economy of spiritual life it has its use and value; it makes for the finer growth of the soul by naturally evoking a spiritual resistance to the vital obscurities of our being.

Spiritual life has in the beginning its tension, and nothing in life can possibly be wrought without initial tension. Sin calls forth the finer resistance and tension and makes the spiritual nature perfectly evident to us. Opposition helps the evolution of life everywhere. The price for spirituality is to be paid by overcoming the restricting influence of sin. Sin in itself has the redeeming feature that it makes the divine light more attractive by contrast.

If sin has a place in spiritual life, the baptism by the fire of faith has a higher place.

Keshab had this fire of faith in him. And it is natural. Spirit is fire when it is to burn up our doubts and vascillations, the darkness and the ignorance, the callousness and the timidity that sin brings in its train.

The fire of the soul burns out the depraving influences and releases the soul in its purity. Sin and faith, ignorance and light, are contraries in spiritual life. They show their use and necessity.

Keshab used to emphasize the baptism of fire. Water washes away sin but fire burns out its root. In the symbolism of fire there is a finer challenge to the lower nature than in the symbolism of water. Keshab was incandescent in this fire of the soul. In this fire the weak soul feels the real strength of spirit. The sleeping spirit comes out with its full radiance. Sin has its service in spiritual life. It dies out by enkindling the fire within. The life of living faith is a life of keen and persistent struggle, and this struggle continues until the full spirituality is manifested in its radiance.

Faith gives Love. Love manifests the sonship of man. Humanity is exalted into divinity, for man is not completely Man; he is son of God. Love is the force that unites the human and the divine and makes humanity secure against all attack and opposition.

Keshab was alive to this union in love, and he used to call it the *synthetic Yoga* as distinguished from the *subjective Yoga* and the *objective Yoga*. Keshab maintained that the Vedic seers realized the fulfilment

of their being in the objective Yoga through the idealization of nature. Nature as the symbol of the Divine was the source of their inspiration. The subjective Yoga, according to Keshab, is reflected in the teachings of the Upanisads, where the union is sought in our *inner subjectivity* and by tracing the identity of the divine and the human in this subjectivity.

If the Vedic seers saw the Truth in the silent forces of nature, the Upanisadic seers saw it in the silence of the soul. But Keshab's yearning went further. He saw the face of God in nature, in the communion of spirit in the soul, which carries it far beyond nature and soul and reveals God in His transcendent beatitude. He sought the Divine in nature, in man and in the Divine Himself. This third phase was to him the perfect culmination in spiritual life, for it lifts our vision from the history of the divine expression through time in nature's working, from the revelation of the shining Truths to the finite spirit, to that everlasting communion beyond time, where spiritual life is presented not in succession but in simultaneity.

Keshab's path was love, his seeking was union in love; and during the later period of his life he realized that the finest blossoming of the soul is possible when all the relations of life are concentrated in God,

and all of them are completely idealized. The human relations are not entirely human. There is the divine touch in them. True spirituality implies their divine functioning.

Life in its integrity is spiritual, and therefore our seeking should not be satisfied with an occasional communion with God in the deep of the soul, but the divinity should be our object and concern in all the spheres of life. Life's impulses are then to be made God-centric, and the natural relations are to be deified. Keshab in this method found the possibility of the transfiguration of the human impulses and the abiding satisfaction that naturally follows in making all the parts of our being centred in God.

God is the friend, the guide, the counsellor, the bridegroom of the soul, the divine father, the holy mother and the playmate. He supplies all the gaps of our being and gratifies all the instinctive impulses by transforming them into divine Love. The instinctive nature in man which becomes a constant trouble to the seeking soul is thus conquered, disciplined and finally idealized. Religious life truly is the spiritualization of instincts. The fundamentals of Keshab's faith and of Vaisnavism do not differ. Vaisnavism as a credo finds in the conception of God as Bridegroom the finest

flowering of Love; and Keshab, true to his theistic instinct accepted it, though he did not go so far as to accept the spiritual figurate of God, as did Chaitanya.

Keshab not only confined himself to the personal realization of God; he felt the impulse of establishing a new church. He separated himself from the church established by Devendranath, since this church appeared to him not sufficiently catholic to accept the truth of all religions. *Nava-Vidhan** is based upon a unique conception of the *synthesis of faiths;* it embraces all faiths, it seeks their fundamental synthesis and fusion. To the ardent soul the church of God must be broad enough to embrace all faiths and all seeking spirits in the eternal communion with God. The universal church is the true church of God, for it is based upon the conception of the essential truth of all religions and faiths. The synthesis which Ram Mohan established is an intellectual synthesis, but Keshab drew his inspiration from life and he saw a finer synthesis of faiths since they are ultimately inspirations from life. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and even Buddhism were studied by his various disciples to find out their living and helpful forces, and Keshab was broad enough not only intellectually but also

* New Dispensation.

spiritually to accept them; for from his own spiritual experience he could see how the fundamentals of religion could fit one another, not exactly in their individual connotations, but as the different aspects of total human spiritual experience. His sympathy with the diverse spiritual experiences of the human race endowed him with a wide outlook which gave him uniqueness as an inspired teacher.

This synthesis of faiths was raised upon theistic ground and theistic setting, for that was the philosophic outlook in Keshab. Buddhism appealed to him by its finer humanism, wide catholicity, and beautiful ethics. Though the negative aspects of its teachings had no charm for Keshab, still he could find that Buddhism in its ethics had laid the foundations of a cosmic humanity.

Islam also had an appeal to him by its conception of God as power and its insistence on the equality of men. The finer democratic spirit of Islam cannot escape the sharp eyes of this ardent seeker. Vaisnavism attracted him by finer stretches of love, a love that could see in God the human element and make Him more accessible to us. God is not only the God of heaven. He is also the God that visits us every hour through the human relations. Keshab was keenly alive

and sensitive to this beatitude of Love. But he seems to have been attracted chiefly by the human character of Christ and the death of Christ for humanity. In it he could see God's power of redemption and the sacrifice of almost his own self for fallen humanity. If Vaisnavism could attract him by the ministration of God in all spheres of life, Christianity could satisfy him by the anxious solicitude of God to redeem humanity.

Vaisnavism makes Love the central conception of its credo; Christianity, grace. Grace has a better appeal for a fallen humanity, Love a finer appeal for redeemed souls. Christ was to him the most attractive spiritual figure in history, for Christ is so precious to humanity. Christ is the Love that saves, the force that uplifts, the power that elevates, the divine that sacrifies itself for suffering humanity. This aspect of Christ-life made the finest appeal to Keshab, because he could understand from his nature how redemption is almost impossible without Divine Grace. And Christ is Grace in flesh. This mingling of the Divine with the Human in Christ is attractive; and, to Keshab, Christ not only bridges the gulf between man and God, but also he is the goal of approach. Man will not be completely divine,

but he shares a divine nature; a divinity that sleeps, but which the influence of Christ awakens in him. Christ represents the eternal truth of the finite embraced by the infinite, the divine expressing itself through the human. This unification of the two is the hope and the promise, and at the same time justification of the life of man in the Divine.

"Christ existed in God before he was created. There is an uncreated Christ, as also the created Christ, the idea of the son and the incarnate son drawing all his vitality and inspiration from the Father."—(*India asks, Who is Christ?* page 379).

The Christ that drew homage from Keshab is the "True Asiatic Christ", divested of all western appendage, carrying on the work of redemption among his own people. "In his every movement—in his uprising and down-setting, his going forth and coming in . . . Christ was truly Asiatic." "Jesus," in Keshab's words, "was our Jesus". This Asiatic Christ, the moving Love, the redeeming mercy, the untutored son of God, unsophisticated, humble and catholic in nature, was to Keshab the veritable ideal of the divine Love that embraces us and saves us. The spirit of God penetrates everywhere as the gentle breeze stimulating life and spirituality.



NEO-HINDUISM OF DAYANANDA

Dayananda Sarasvati is the founder of the Arya Samaj. A strong man with a transparent being, Dayananda was a power in the land of the Five Rivers, and his influence is felt throughout the whole of Hindusthan. Dayananda had a receptive mind, but he was endowed with a critical faculty of a high order. His mind was not prepared to accept the traditional faith prevalent in those days in India, especially in his native place at Morvi in the Kathiawar Peninsula. Dayananda's make-up was fundamentally rational, combined with a devotional heart and high-strung will-power.

Born in an orthodox Shaiva family, he was a seeker of the ultimate Truth; but curiously the doubt which precedes all sincere illumination took hold of him on a day of Sivaratri when his family was celebrating the worship of Siva in the temple. His doubting heart could not accept the *rationale* of image worship which was offered by his father; and soon after, in his sixteenth year, a tragic occurrence in

his family made so deep an impression on his mind that he crossed the rubicon by stealing away from his house in quest of Truth and the living God. He had his travels and wanderings. He came across many Yogis; he practised yoga, read the Sastras and the Vedanta under Paramhansa Paramananda, and became almost a convert to the Advaita Vedanta.

Paramananda initiated him into the life of wanderer and gave him the name Dayananda. His original name was Moola Samkara. He was given another name, Suddha Caitanya, when he was introduced into the order of the life-celebates by Bhagat Ram. Dayananda was not satisfied with the prevalent theology, metaphysics and sociology. He felt that Hindu society was in a state of degradation, moral weakness originating from superfluous ceremonials, meaningless rituals and false religious ideas. Love of knowledge was non-existent, study of arts and sciences was neglected. The higher castes oppressed the lower, the strong ill-treated the weak. His receptive mind saw the disease and was anxious for the cure. But, before he could do anything, he was thinking of reviving the study of the ancient scriptures on scientific and rational lines; and he felt that his education, already wide, was not wide

enough for the purpose. He then fortunately came into contact with a great Vedic scholar, Swami Virajānanda, a blind Sannyasi carrying with him the light of the Vedas in his brain. From Virajānanda Dayananda received the illumination necessary to the spirit of revival he had in him. The spirit of challenge which Dayananda incorporated in himself from his very childhood found then its confirmation from Swami Virajānanda, who used to demarcate Aryan culture into the Pre-Mahabharat period and the Post-Mahabharat period. Virajānanda had not the least sympathy with the Tantric and the Pouranic cultures.

He used to hold that the life in the Vedic ages and times reached its highest level in illumination, and culture: intellectual, moral and spiritual. Dayananda henceforth identified him with the cultural heritage of the Rishis in the Vedas and concentrated his energies for the revival of the Vedic studies and the Vedic discipline in life. Dayananda was a conscious revivalist.

Deep in his studies of the Vedas and the Sastras, quiet in his meditative contemplation, blessed by his Guru Virajānanda, he was inspired to preach and establish the Vedic religion in India in place of the Pouranic religion. The culture of the Vedas

naturally appeals to the high-tuned soul, and he saw in the Vedas the full code of life in all its aspects. Like a true Āryan, he was charmed with the profundity of the Vedic lore, its magnificent approach to life's problems, its dignified solutions. Dayananda was a real devotee; but his devotion did not proceed from his emotional being. It was serene, quiet and deep. The spirituality of the Puranas has emotional colouring, but the spirituality of the Vedic literature stirs the finer intellectual structure of our being and originates the intellectual love of God, the serene and quiet spiritual opening in the recesses of our being. This intellectual spirituality enabled Dayananda to observe an equilibrium between wisdom and action, between intuition and life. Dayananda was a seer and an actor in life. He could act well, because he could see well. His outlook was confined to the Vedas, and he used to think that the Vedas contained the full code of life. He exhibited the finer spirit of a Rishi, for he was not satisfied merely with the philosophical argumentation, but was anxious to take his stand upon the words of God. Between revelation and reason, he put more stress upon the former, and he fought shy of unillumined and unguided reason. The writings of the Swami showed his deep

love and almost fond affection for the revelations of the Vedas—and a clue to the estimate of his character and his work could be found there, and there only.

Dayananda was not ready to make the least compromise as did the other teachers of Hinduism with the teachings of post-Vedic literatures, and he rejected the literatures that developed after them. Samkara did not refer to Pouranic literatures in his commentaries. Neither did Dayananda. He used to think that Hinduism in its period of decadence had produced such literatures because it could not stand the dazzling light of the Vedas.

In his interpretation of the Vedas Dayananda also took a new line and direction. He read life synthetically and saw the economy of all the forces in life. He was never for the elimination of any one of them,—Karma, Upāsanā and Jñāna—in any stage of life; for full adaptation to life requires all these as integral forces.

Dayananda accepted the usual division of Esoteric and Exoteric knowledge of the Vedas. Aparā-jñāna gives us the knowledge of the creative principle and evolution. Parā-Jñāna gives the knowledge of the omnipotent and the omniscient Brahman. Both these kinds of knowledge demand

his full attention, for the creative energy is ultimately related to Brahman who is immanent as well as Transcendent. God is the creator and His creativeness is not ideal but real. This creation manifests His power, wisdom and justice, and the redeeming power reveals His grace and love. Dayananda was the last man to concur with the Vedantic conclusion about the illusoriness of the world. He was successful in breaking away from the Vedantic teachings of his former teacher.

His main philosophical teaching is theistic. He used to believe in the efficient and material causes of the universe. God is the efficient cause, Prakriti is the material cause. Prakriti evolves the world out of itself under the impress of God. God cannot transform Himself into the world, for that would deny His reality; nor can the world be illusion, for it manifests the tendencies, forces and purposes of life. He could find the *via media* by making God the transforming cause, Prakriti, the material cause. Matter has no expression in itself; hence the creative expression must refer itself to God. This way of thinking synthetically is philosophy. Science takes into account only matter and its modification.

The Purusha, the transcendent reality, envelopes all existence. He is immanent in man. Dayananda

wrote in his introduction to the commentary on the Vedas: "The Purusha enjoys in his transcendence, which is his being, the delight of aloneness. But in relation to the world, he is the stay of all, the all-revealer, the delight of all. The world emerges out of it, it sinks back into it. But it has its transcendental freedom and luminosity and consciousness. From this first and original existence emanates the second self called the Virāt, the cosmic self, which embraces the whole existence in its collective totality."*

The Virāt is really the being in which the unity of the totality is reflected. From Virāt emanate the finite beings and objects. The first Purusha remains detached from the active creation, including Virāt. The totality is always relative to the creative dynamism. The finite selves as subjects reflect the finite universe; the Virāt as super-subject reflects the infinite universe. But the *Purna* Purusha enjoys the transcendence without any contact with the cosmic creation.

God is the centre of all wisdom and illumination. He keeps His wisdom confined in Himself and reveals it to men and gods at the time of creation.

God starts the cycle of creation by energizing

* Dayananda's Rik Veda—Bhāsyopatghāt.

Prakriti and with it also reveals His wisdom, love and power. The Vedas are eternal. Dayananda accepted the eternity of Sabdas as pertaining to the nature of God. And when they are revealed, they take the form of the Vedas. The Vedas are the depositories of the illumined wisdom; they are received, not created. God expressed wisdom in Word. And the Word is co-eternal with God. But here the Word should not signify Reason; the Word is really the illumined medium of the divine wisdom.

Finite mind has two aspects of being: the aspect of reason and the aspect of will. But the will aspect makes it an agent and subjects it to desires. These desires cause bondage and endless birth. The will should be illumined by reason and should concentrate itself on illumination to obtain liberation. The will of desires is displaced by the will to knowledge and wisdom.

Dayananda agreed with the main outlook of Indian thought that ignorance is the cause of bondage. But instead of laying all emphasis on the Vedanta as the sole cause of cutting off the psychological complexes arising out of Ignorance, Dayananda laid stress on Yajna (sacrificial rites), Upāsanā (meditation) as contributing to final redemption. They

purify our being, they make us responsive to the finer currents of life. Upāsanā makes us God-centred, which finally gives wisdom and liberates us from the bondage of Prakriti.

Yoga gives a detachment from the finer and the gross nature; and devotion receives the illumination sent into the soul by God. Dayananda saw the practical utility of the synthesis of knowledge, Yoga and devotion. He favoured the Yoga of Patanjali. Intuition finally sanctions the search by giving wisdom, but this intuition is not the transcendent intuition of Samkara but a sympathetic and synthetic insight which recovers the lost knowledge of self and God and their inseparable union in knowledge and love.

If Dayananda was earnest in reviving the Vedic studies and disciplines, he was no less earnest in remoulding society upon the ancient conception of natural fitness, character, and adaptation, and not upon blood-inheritance.

He was an out-and-out critic of the social system of the Hindus which was prevalent in his time, and was anxious to destroy it. Fitness is not by birth, but by character. The aristocracy of character was recognized by him. He selected his disciples even

from the men of low castes, and one of them turned out a fine Vedic scholar. But Dayananda saw the naturalness of the types of men, and he included them within the original four divisions, which represent the real scientific classification of men. But the functional division does not mean any fresh partition of the concrete humanity, nor any hard and fast unchangeable grouping. This elasticity accounts for the elasticity of life in the Arya Samaj. Fitness raises individuals to places of responsibility. Dayananda completely broke the superiority complex of the upper classes and integrated all men and women into the fold of one society. The fourfold division of men according to their functions is very natural and has come to stay, but the interchange of blood amongst them keeps up the conception of society as one concrete thing, and society thus gets a dynamic plasticity in place of static rigidity. The sense of division and isolation seemed to dominate at a stage in Hindu society so that the concrete integrity of humanity was a matter more of intellect than of life. Dayananda made it living.

Among other reforms he abolished early marriages and encouraged foreign travels. In a word, Dayananda had a free spirit; he introduced that into the race by

allowing it free movement, free mixing. He freely admitted students, both male and female, and allowed them to read the Vedas and even opened the sacred lore to the Sudras from whom they so long had been withheld.

Dayananda had no conservative instinct, but he based his ideas upon the Vedas. He was a dynamic personality who vitalized all the forces of life and re-established them as vigorous, healthy, cultural and civilizing forces.

If the Swami was great in his constructive ideas, he was no less great in creative ideals and practical creation. He observed the strict Brahmacharya. He had illuminations for days; but, like all great teachers of humanity, he wanted the race to profit by his experience and culture. He was determined, therefore, to initiate a revival of Vedic culture, which is the foundation of all other reformations. To this end, he founded the society now widely known by the name of Arya Samaj.

The Arya Samaj is guided by certain fundamental rules with a definite end in view. These rules are :—

(1) Supreme being is the spring of all true knowledge. This, again, is the only object worthy of being known.

(2) God is Truth. He is the beautiful. He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He is the support of all, the creator and the director of the universe. Worship is due only to Him.

(3) The Vedas are the real scriptures. The knowledge of the Vedas is supreme necessity.

(4) Truth is to be accepted, untruth to be removed.

(5) Action should follow the law of Dharma.

(6) The prime object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world—to promote the physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.

(7) Conduct is to be guided by purity, righteousness and justice.

(8) Nescience is to be destroyed; knowledge, scientific and spiritual, must be acquired.

(9) All should abide by the laws of society calculated to promote the well-being of all; but everybody is free to observe the law affecting his individual well-being.*

The keen mind of Dayananda could feel that unless a new educational programme could be prepared, society would not awake from its slumber and be

* Swami Dayananda published by G. A. Natesan.

vigorously dynamic. He based his educational programme upon the spirit of synthesis of the ancient spiritual heritage with the modern scientific attitude. He was convinced that the best in the modern culture should be combined with the finest in the ancient culture. But he was bent upon keeping up the Aryan spirit and the Aryan outlook on life. A deep introduction into the cultural heritage of the Vedic seers was for this purpose thought necessary. And, unlike most of us, he thought that the Vedic culture could be still vigorously useful in our life, for in the unfolding of life nothing could compare to its force and power. If he was so keen about cultural continuity, it was because he felt that the spiritual efficiency of the race could be preserved in this way; he found something in the Vedic culture which could not be found anywhere else. The opening of spiritual life, the vital elasticity, the finer flowering it gave could not be gained in any other way; but this warm appreciation of the ancient culture did not make him a blind follower of it.

In the vicissitudes of life, he recognized the value of the scientific adaptation and the scientific knowledge of life; the one giving the secret of the freedom from nature, the other the secret of the control of nature;

and in the economy of life both are equally necessary, the one for walking straight in the path of Mukti, the other for regulating and organizing the forces of life. This spirit of scientific appreciation enabled him to find out the scientific outlook of life in the Vedas, the reciprocal influence of nature and spirit.

Though Dayananda dispensed with the conception of devas, gods and goddesses—for to him devas mean the shining forces of nature—still the formative influence of nature upon our physical and mental being could not escape him, and he originated forms of worship and sacrifice that could draw influences from nature favourable to human prosperity and well-being. And in educational institutions started under the auspices of the Arya Samaj the performance of sacrificial rites before the sunrise and the sunset is a special feature. And, to keep up the ancient spirit in our life, he emphasized the observance of Brahmacharya amongst the boys and the girls. Brahmacharya gives the vital strength, the vital harmony, which finally makes for psychic purity and psychic luminosity.

The Arya Samaj does not observe caste-distinction in society and encourages inter-dining and inter-marriage. It believes in the integration of the communities into a strong nation. The Arya Samaj con-

ceives Hinduism as an integral humanity representing an integral faith. It has affiliated the lower castes into the higher fold of Hindu society.

Dayananda broke the oligarchical basis of Brahmanism and established a really democratic society. Functional distinction does not cause social divisions and caste distinctions.

Dayananda also emphasized female emancipation and female education. Marriage, according to him, was a spiritual institution to give birth to finer types of humanity. He used to impress the strength, the vitality, the catholic outlook, the deep spirituality of the women of yore and preached the sacredness of motherhood.

Motherhood is not to be rejected as a burden, but welcomed as the occasion for flowering and fruition. The sacredness of motherhood makes marriage a divine event, procreation a divine act. And this sacredness is observed by maintaining all sorts of discipline and purity in the relation between man and woman; and purity, physical and biological, is raised to the dignity of spirituality. The whole creation is a spiritual event.

Swami Dayananda was an idealist in his philosophy, a realist in his outlook on life as manifested on

earth. Though a social democrat, he was for a vigorous and manly expression of Hinduism, and was actually pained at the morbid emotionalism and weakness at times exhibited in Hinduism. Himself essentially active; he used to impress activity in all concerns of life. The Arya Samaj imbibes from him the vital side of his nature and represents to-day an advanced section of Hinduism with eager determination to make Hinduism a force in the land of its birth.

Strong is the epithet that can be applied in truth to Dayananda; strong in intellect, strong in adventures, strong in heart, and strong in organizing forces. And his teaching through life and writings can be summed up in one word: strength.

XI

SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS OF RAMAKRISHNA

One of the most potent forces in the present-day cultural and spiritual life in India is Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Ramakrishna was the *silent man* of God. He used to live in a sequestered place at Dakshineswar, six miles to the north of Calcutta. Ramakrishna was a child of nature, a child of the Divine Mother. His character can be summed up in one word, God-centric. He was God-intoxicated. Nothing in life—the warmest relations, the family ties—could deflect his being from the quest of his soul—God.

His God-centricity removed him from all touch with life, and he was often supposed to be a *lunatic*. Thus are the elect of God always regarded by their contemporaries! Far removed from the noise of civilization, confined within the temple of the Divine Mother, he was often heard to cry out : "Mother, I want Thee, and nothing else—neither name, nor fame, nor power. Give me the love, the intense devotion

which can reveal Thyself to me." Only the child of God can be anxious for God. Such men are so finely attuned and delicately sensitive and responsive that they cannot be satisfied with anything short of direct vision and realization. Their souls always pant after God. It is indeed difficult to understand them intellectually.

Mystics are a unique race. Their language is their own. Their approach is their own. They blossom as flowers in the hand of God; Ramakrishna was a super-mystic. Hence his message and teachings have a unique importance; for they proceed direct from the divine impress upon his being. Intellectual fineness cannot always reach this level; unless the psychic being is transparent, the spiritual aspect of our being cannot be penetrated and its secrets revealed. Spiritual revelation is a subtle stage of knowledge which comes with pure being. To read a spiritual life requires spiritual sympathy and spiritual vision, otherwise there is every possibility of false reading and false interpretation of the message. Ramakrishna showed many phases of spiritual experience. Without a catholic, free and elastic mind, there is every chance of committing mistakes in our attempt to explain and interpret him. Ramakrishna will

appear to some as a clear pathological subject, to some as a man of exuberant feelings, to some as a powerful lover of the Divine Mother, to some as a man always giving the correct judgment in worldly affairs, and to some as a man of wisdom who has attained the highest philosophical truth. This moment, he is a sane man, next moment, he is almost insane. This moment, he is absorbed within himself, next moment, he is in ecstatic dance. This moment, he is a sober teacher solving subtleties of life, next moment, he is in a fit of righteous indignation giving a slap to the lady proprietress of the holy temple as she was thinking of worldly affairs before the Mother. This moment, he is a sober Vedantist, next moment, he exhibits the Mother's power to Totā, his Vedantic teacher, who refuses to accept the truth of Sakti, the dynamic Divine. He used to exhibit fine shades of religious feelings and sentiments in their infinite varieties. Far removed from human eyes, his life flowered in love, devotion and divine wisdom.

His being was a veritable spiritual laboratory in which he had experiments with every kind of spiritual experience. He felt them, measured them and judged them. He was born at a time when the Hindu religion was attacked by advanced and liberal

thought, and it was no small task for Ramakrishna unconsciously to revive people's faith in the ancient religion. He was not a conscious revivalist like Swami Dayananda, for he had no conscious purpose, save and except a union with the Divine Mother. A spiritual rose that he was, blossoming under the fond eyes of the Mother, he could not be a conscious founder of any sect. He had indeed the prevision that disciples were hovering round him; yet he showed the least conscious effort to establish a sect or a cult.

Whatever he did, he did under the inspiration from the Divine Mother. He had a soft corner for suffering humanity. So spiritually sensitive was he, that he could not but be responsive to the spiritual needs of the age, yet in his teachings or preachings there was no conscious effort or any studied art. His heart had its natural outflow in love.

During the early years of Ramakrishna the Brahmo Samaj had its palmy days; the synthetic intellectual spirit of Ram Mohan, together with the aesthetic intuitionism of Devendranath and the living ecstatic faith of Keshab Chandra had made the Brahmo Samaj movement a very strong and effective movement amongst the cultured people. Orthodox faith was shaken to its foundation. Ramkrishna by his intense

spirituality which he had attained by the time-honoured disciplines and methods, showed the dynamism, power and potentiality of the orthodox faith. He had the spiritual genius to establish that Hinduism was not idolatry, that there was a fine scientific discipline in the orthodox cult to evoke spiritual powers and extensive visions.

Though he began with the traditional method of worshipping the Divine Mother, he attained the greatest blessing of wisdom transcendental. Ramakrishna discovered the esoteric path leading to esoteric wisdom.

He practised many forms of Sādhanā. Before his time, even in the fold of Hinduism, differences prevailed between the worship of Vishnu and the worship of Sakti; the adherents of faiths naturally claimed superiority for their own. The sensitive being of Ramakrishna could not tolerate these differences in the fundamental convictions of human life; and, before he could give out any solution, he practised these faiths and judged them by their fruits. Nay, more, he practised even the Islamic and the Christian faiths and personally felt their power and potentiality. "He respected the Quran and recited the 'nimaz'. He meditated on the Madonna and the child-Christ." Ramakrishna, with

the true spirit and conviction of a spiritual experimentalist gave out his famous declaration: 'as many doxies, so many paths: 'all paths lead to the same goal.'*

But what is the goal in spiritual life?

It is to realize the oneness of being and ineffable delight in the oceanic calm. Ramakrishna used to say that the doll of salt when thrown into the sea dissolves into it, and no sign of it can be traced. But the case of Ramakrishna was different. His being used to oscillate between spiritual calm and spiritual dynamism; sometimes his being used to be absolutely silent in the depths of spiritual life and at other times it was vibrant under the impress of spiritual dynamism.

And it is natural with one who aspires to its realization through life. In the course of realization the spiritual life manifests many phases, and they are due to the ingress of the forces of spirit into being. The exhibition of the different shades of transparent delight is due to the impress of the spiritual power

* The differences in religions follow from the basic philosophic concepts. But with psychic opening and luminosity which spiritual realization presupposes, the differences of the creeds almost melt away; the live experiences in spirituality are almost the same.

upon the psychic and vital dynamism of being. When the spiritual force penetrates our being, all the finer forces receive spiritual colouring and spiritual transfiguration. And the psychic dynamism becomes, as it were, a fit vehicle for the expression of spiritual Ananda and spiritual powers. The intensity of the spiritual ingress may be so high that sometimes it overcomes the normal consciousness and withdraws the soul from its association with the mental-vital functioning into the realm of luminous consciousness and ineffable delight.

Spiritual life, in its finest phases of realization, exhibits a tendency not only to pass into an ineffable calm, but also a contrary tendency to bring down a genial ray from the height of luminous consciousness, to infuse the whole being with it and to diffuse or send out its effect all round to benefit the surrounding humanity.

This indeed is possible in the case of fit souls who can preserve a continuity between the unfathomable depth of being and the ordinary normal consciousness.

The mystic opening in many of us may be occasional; the flicker of light comes and goes. There may be alternate opening and closing. But in

Ramakrishna it was all opening; though at times the intensity of the spiritual urge would remove his consciousness from the psychic surrounding and vital expression, still he maintained a hold upon the spiritual consciousness even in normal attitudes of life. The spiritual sense was in his case too true to be absent from him.

Ramakrishna had this uniqueness in him that he was not for losing himself in the illumined silence. It is difficult to understand him, as it is difficult to understand all spiritual geniuses that aspire to be centres of dynamic relations between Heaven and Earth. Intellectually an association with or absorption in God is welcome as the height of spiritual venture. This is spiritual life understood in intellectual concepts, but spiritual life is not exactly like that. It is at once a life of absorption, illumination and inspired activity. Spiritual life when fully developed does not leave any part of the being unaffected. It moulds our vital and psychic being in such a way as to make it a fit medium of spiritual expression; hence the spiritual genius exhibits different tendencies. There is a class of seekers who become quite absorbed. They cannot intermediate between the

quiet of spiritual life and its masterful expression as formative and moulding influences.

Such a type cannot bring into the world the formative influences of spirit. Ramakrishna was not of this type. His genius could freely move both in the spheres of spiritual silence and of expression. In fact, he gave up his power of choice completely between spiritual calm and spiritual expression. This choice presupposes an intellectual and categorical determination of spirituality. Ramakrishna could not make that. The Divine Mother could withdraw him into silence, She could also instil his being with her spiritual charges.

Ramakrishna's life was a play under the guidance of the Divine Mother. Though Ramakrishna held the height of transcendence as the end of spiritual quest, still his life and psychic being was as a stringed instrument in the hands of the Divine Mother from which her touch liberated exquisite strains of spiritual music.

Ramakrishna used to feel the ingress of dynamic spirituality in his being which caused him to dance and sing for joy and made him a veritable spiritual force. This dynamic spiritualism had its fine exhibition when he used to awaken spiritual perception, luminous intuition and radiant sensation by

simply touching the physical bodies of his disciples. One day Hriday, a nephew of Ramakrishna, when he was touched by him, began to shout, "Ramakrishna, you are Brahman, I too am Brahman, there is no difference between us." Once Vivekananda had the same inspiring touch when his doubtful mind was not ready to accept the Master.

The superior spiritual fineness of Ramakrishna had its best expression when he could make the holy spirit descend into his wife, Sāradā Moni, and make her realize her Divine Motherhood.

Ramakrishna's art was simple because his life-energy was directly connected with the divine-energy. This made Ramakrishna's life unique. The men of God have shown their extraordinariness in every age. They have removed human sufferings and privations. They have instituted divine philosophies on earth and have started new cycles of civilization.

But Ramakrishna withdrew the veil of ignorance directly from many and revealed the potentiality of a life in the divine. He could change life immediately and could throw off the ignorance of centuries. Himself a direct centre of spiritual dynamism, he could readily remould the initiates and effect immediate conversions of character. Testimonies to such powers have

been held by persons who came under the spell of his spiritual influence.

Ramakrishna felt the dynamic identification with the Divine. Apparently he had the mood of the son withdrawn completely into and resting in the Divine Mother; but this outward attitude in the psychic being had its complementary one in the inner, the constant identification with the Divine. Ramakrishna's external attitude was of the devotee, his internal realization was the clear sense of an identification with the Divine. He used to feel this identification and expressed it many times, and convinced the doubtful Vivekananda of this during his last illness.

Christ used to feel the identity of the sonship and the fatherhood of God. So did Ramakrishna feel the identity of the Divine Child and the Divine Mother. This identification was the secret of their powers. The power was not of the son or the child, but of God.

The Son of Man has his being in God, his whole self is introverted. This extreme withdrawnness makes him a fit medium for God-expression. This sense of unity never drops and never fails.

Spiritual life has an ascent and a descent: ascent from the sense of self-division and the limiting influence of matter, and descent in light, love and Ananda.

This descent is different from the original descent in self-alienation in creation; it is descent in love and knowledge to reveal the treasures of divine life and to establish it on earth. And the spirit of God takes hold of the elect and diffuses its influence on earth. There is this necessity in the Divine, for life has its root in it and occasions arise when the flow of life needs a replenishing from the divine source. The obstruction of matter is to be set aside to make life free, easy, serene and delightful. The elect are the mediums of transmission. In their being there must be some divine aspiration which alone makes them the fit recipients and the fit transmitters of the divine inspiration.

Sonship is not confined to one individual. Potentially it is everywhere, but it becomes apparent in some centres because of their finer responsiveness.

There is *a law of spiritual inversion* in spiritual discipline and realization. Ramakrishna could base the synthesis of faiths upon this law.

There is a constant tendency in man to become God, and a contrary tendency in God to become man. Without these tendencies there can be no spiritual life in the concrete. Indeed the mystery of concrete spiritual life lies in this law of contradiction. Without this constant contradiction life, either in the Divine or

in the human, cannot become so rich and so exquisite in beauty.

Spiritual life has its charm because there is a constant seeking of the Divine by the human and a constant yearning for the human in the Divine. This yearning and that seeking make the spiritual life a mystery which cannot always be understood categorically.

This law of inversion really explains away the differences that are found in religions. These differences arise because of a too categorical understanding of religion. Because Ramakrishna could proceed directly in the path of life, the difficulties which beset the intellectual understanding of the different paths could not obstruct him. During his time as now, there were in Bengal different sects like the Vaishnavas and the Sāktas.

The Vaishnavas emphasize an approach and a realization different from those of the Sāktas. Their approach is theistic, their realization is a spiritual fellowship with the Divine in love; they insist always upon a difference between the human and the Divine. The Sāktas' initial approach is also theistic, but in their realization they insist more upon identity than upon

difference; their outlook is to overcome the sonship of man and to realize the Siva-hood.

Spiritual life, whatever be the form, has no meaning, unless there is nearness and alikeness with God, but the Vaishnavas with all the akinness of spirit emphasize the categorical distinction between the human and the Divine. Their philosophy will not allow a complete merging or dynamic identification. But even the Vaishnavas could not escape the law of spiritual inversion in spiritual life, for they freely recognize the divine inspiration of man, his divine possession; nay, they feel the necessity for God delimiting himself and appearing as man. The finest expression of God, according to them, is possible in human figure and human form.

The devotee is anxious to be more and more God-like. God is anxious to enjoy the blessedness of devotional consciousness. To exhibit the finest beatitude God at times assumes the attitude of the seeker and reveals to humanity the dynamic identification of the lover and the beloved. God is the objective. God is the path. "I am the light, I am the path." Such is the contradiction involved in spiritual life. Man ascends, God descends.

Sāktism also exhibits this *contradiction*. The son

becomes the Siva or God. The Divine Mother reveals the Siva-hood where the sonship is sincere and complete. The son becomes the Father even as the Father becomes the son through the intervention of the Divine Mother.

Whatever may be fixed as the highest ideal, spiritual life exhibits fulfilment through a contradiction. The Vaishnavas differ from the Sāktas in their ideal, but Ramakrishna through his life found out that though the approach and the philosophy may be different because of the stress and emphasis on this or that side of life, yet spiritual life in essence implies a fulfilment through a contradiction.

The Vaishnavas draw back from complete inversion, though they see the necessity of inversion for the richest experiences in spiritual life; they see the law but are not bold enough to forgo the joy of a fellowship with the Divine. Inversions to them are states that are experiences in the intensity of love; they represent the rare exceptions in spiritual experience, but not the law. Sāktas categorically accept them as exhibiting the profounder secrets of spiritual life. The Vaishnavic emphasis on the distinction of the human and the Divine does not allow the satisfactory working of the process of inversion.

Ramakrishna saw the affinities of spiritual existences and felt that such inversions speak for the identity of reality; for inversions can be possible only when there is affinity and identity of nature; spiritual inversions, instead of proving eternal distinctions between the human and the Divine, speak of their identity in essence; for they dispossess us of the conviction of the eternal distinction of the finite and the infinite and point out their essential community of being. The dynamic spirituality cannot of course enjoy the finest nature of spiritual consciousness in illumined silence. And, therefore, the identification must be through contradiction, and must be different from the Transcendent illumination beyond all dynamism. Ramakrishna was conscious of this illumination, but he was also alive to the divine play in the cosmos. Ramakrishna was not all for Transcendence, but was eager to open unto humanity the *chapter* of spirituality sealed in the bosom of the Divine. The Transcendence which became the all-absorbing concern with Samkara and the play which has become the all-absorbing concern to the Vaishnavas demanded equal attention from him; for he realized Transcendence, tested the undying sweetness of the play, felt the interference of the Divine in the cosmic affairs of men and the intense love of

the Divinity which would give itself to save humanity from ignorance.

Ramakrishna pinned his faith into Transcendence as the supreme form of spiritual experience, and he could feel that this experience presupposes all other experiences and has in it something which is unique, for it presents an aspect which is nowhere else presented, the spiritual life beyond expression either through nature or through space and time, or through history. This unique Transcendence gives us the taste of freedom in spiritual life, because here we transcend humanity and divinity and come to feel the supramental silence and Ananda. Ramakrishna accepts this to be the finest experience, for it gives the unique experience of self as complete freedom from the blessings of life and pangs of death. And this revelation has an influence of wonderful elasticity on us, for it releases us from the thought of self, however fine or glorious, and sees that the life is a projection of self on the canvas of space and time. It is the Eternal Now. "For the *now* wherein God made the first man and the *now* wherein the last man disappears and the *now* I speak in, all are the same in God where there is but the *now*." —(Meister Eckhart: Sermon and Collections, page 37).

Gods, angels and men are our creations, Christs and Buddhas are our dreams. This kind of spiritual realization, beyond the bounds of space and time, modified all the previous experiences of Ramkrishna and he could now see that love and service have no meaning apart from this central thought of an unclouded and boundless existence. This existence is everywhere. However the soul may appear as wrapped in ignorance, it remains always the same in its purity, simplicity and transcendence. Love is the attraction of the soul for itself. Service is the concern of the soul for itself. Soul is all. This vision of the all-embracing soul modifies the conception of love and service.

Ramakrishna realized the Truth and handed it over to Vivekananda to give practical shape to it, so that humanity might realize the great truth of the Vedānta through life and make it a living truth in family and social life.

Ramakrishna left the inspiration which was made into a living faith by his disciples. Vivekananda had the advantage of receiving his inspiration not from the dead pages of philosophy, but from a master who was living the Truth. Originally an intellectual agnostic with a heart endowed with true seeking and love, Vive-

kananda saw the living image of Wisdom and Love in Ramakrishna. Vivekananda got his illumination direct from his master who stirred up spiritual dynamism in the disciples and made them realize the truth of the Divine in the Self and of the Self in the Divine.

Vivekananda saw the road to true individuality and freedom. He was not irresponsive to religious love and religious emotionalism, though personally he found in transcendence, the finest fulfilment of life. Vivekananda in his writings has acknowledged the values of Jñāna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga as so many paths to spiritual fulfilment. "Jñāna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga—these are the four paths which lead to salvation. One must follow the path for which one is best suited."* Again, he felt that the different commentators on the Vedānta really fulfilled a need considering the progressive aspects of spiritual life. He did not at once brush them aside, but accepted them as meeting the needs of the unfolding self. The philosophical positions of Dvaita, Visishtādvaita or Advaita were to him not absolute logical systems, but stages in spiritual expression and growth. "In these three systems we find the gradual

* The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. V, p. 328.

working up of the human mind towards higher and higher ideals, till everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in the Advaita system. Therefore these three are not contradictory, they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and one, as it were, is the stepping stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita, 'Thou art That' is reached."* Logic has compacted these experiences into systems and thereby has invited conflicts into them. But if life can be released from the thraldom of logic, it exhibits these kinds of experience culminating in the experience of beatific Freedom.

Vivekananda approached religion and philosophy through an analysis of life and psychic experience and he welcomed that as the highest which gave the *finest* idea of freedom. In the unique perception of the Self in the quietus of its being beyond time and space he found such a realization before which the finest of spiritual visions paled into insignificance. The finest God-realization through love and devotion may give the cherished blessings of the heart—the finest luminous experiences of the soul; but this still keeps us within the bounds of experience, however glorious.

* The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. III, p. 396.

Vivekananda evaluated all spiritual experiences as vouchsafed unto him through the grace of his master, and finally came to realize the sublimity, the truth and the majesty of the Self as superior to all experience and the most potent of all facts. Atman is the Truth of truths. Vivekananda did not lay much stress upon the metaphysics of the Vedānta nor upon the speculative thinking which can only give us systems but not that spirit and insight which can make us stand before the face of Silence. His teachings have, therefore, an appeal to life. He was a prophet of life, and philosophy to him had a value in life in so far as it helped the finest living and the greatest realization. Even the higher functions of the soul in Yoga and devotion were to him bondages; in the conflicts and maladjustments of life he was not able to see the rational justification for a Personal God. He was all for freedom. The idea of a soft and kind God with the gifts of grace and redemption had no charm for him. He was anxious to work out his own salvation through struggle, knowledge and wisdom.

Gods, angels and helpers had no fascination for him, for he felt that the bondage was self-created, and should be broken by self-possession. He maintained the heroic attitude in all concerns of life—even in

spiritual life. His acceptance of Ramkrishna as master was characterized by a free spirit, and at times by lively revolts. The surrender on the one side and the acceptance on the other were both free. Ramakrishna was not an ordinary teacher. He could understand Vivekananda's strong questioning and agnostic spirit, and instead of commending to him the path of devotion and love, he, in response to Vivekananda's psychic nature and constitution, accepted all his challenges and gave him experimental verification of God, not in His immanental unity but in His transcendental freedom.

Between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda there was no distance of the master and the disciple. The two were united in the spirit of Vedānta. Vivekananda's soul had the intense yearning for freedom from the partialities of life, its conflicts and clash of interests; he was seeking touch with something which could for ever dispel ignorance and all speculative and practical conflicts arising therefrom. His heart was eager for direct realization of the Reality, the vision of which could dispel the sense of separateness that lies at the root of all troubles in life. He was panting for that.

Vivekananda saw the Atman within and without,

his self in all, all in him—a vision that could originate selflessness in love and service. Vivekananda was the spirit of selflessness incarnated in flesh. He could feel that true knowledge originated from it. It was not an ideal for him. It was his being. He could see that selfless living was better than mere speculative philosophy, and he accentuated it. This self-giving and self-opening were to him the ways to wisdom. The Vedānta was to him the gospel of life, and not mere philosophy. Samkara Vedānta passes into scholasticism in the writings of the Samkarites. The intellectual understanding of Māyā with its nice logical disquisition, kept the scholars engaged. The more serious amongst them in their retirement used to reflect on the axiom of identity. But Vivekananda realized the fruitlessness of this philosophical scholasticism. He wanted his brother disciples to realize the illusions of life through selfless service to the down-trodden and suffering humanity.

The ego in all its chains must be sacrificed before the noble Truth of the freedom of the Self can be realized. This faith is not the path of understanding, but the path of living. The finest understanding comes from life. The sacrifice of life in the true spirit

purifies the mind and before it the finest truths of philosophy stand revealed.

The pangs of death, the afflictions of existence have no sting for the sacrificing soul. The joys of heaven, the blessings of life have no attraction for him. He stands above them. The deep realization in the silence of being of the majesty of the Atman could make Vivekananda a hero in the battle-field of life; the greatest hero is he who has nothing to win, but everything to give. With this spirit of love and self-lessness based upon the realization of the same Self in every human being, the free spirit of the Swami moved over the face of the world to inspire men with freedom in Atman and love for all. He felt at times that Buddhas and Christs were the waves of the ocean of Existence which he was.

This vision of the all-ness of the 'I' could at once make him invite the fierce and the terrible along with the beautiful and the delightful. The fierce was not fierce to him, the terrible not terrible. Vivekananda was not responsive merely to the sunny side of life but also to its dark side, for this also was the Divine.

"Lo! how all are scared by the Terrific
None seek Elokeshi whose form is death.
The deadly frightful sword, reeking with blood,

They take from her hand, and put a lute instead!
Thou dreaded Kāli, the All-destroyer,
Thou alone art True; Thy shadow's shadow
Is indeed the pleasant Vanamāli (Krisna)."*

Krisna with flute in hand, pouring forth soul-stirring harmonies, becomes the heart's attraction and the eyes' repose. But Vivekananda showed keen appreciation of a God as terrible as sweet. Kāli, the Mother, creates, preserves and destroys. To make God sweet and beautiful and to deny the fierceness of God is to present only one side of His nature. Vivekananda saw the finer spiritual secrets in the worship of the Terrible. The worship of the Terrible arouses manly feelings and draws us closer to the silence in the withdrawal of the world. The Beautiful stirs *finer* joys of heaven and earth, the Terrible stirs the *greater* joys of the creation being withdrawn into the breast of the Mother. Is this destruction? This surely is the breaking of the humanistic chords, but this also is the opening of a new vista in supramental realization.

Humanity suffers from a sense of the Terrible. But he who can invite it with a smile really overcomes it, for he has found out the finer secret of life. "It is a

* *And let Shyama dance there.* The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV, p. 442.

mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek pain. There can be bliss in torture too. Let us worship the Terror for its own sake. 'Only by the worship of the Terrible can the Terrible be overcome and immortality gained.''*

Vivekananda was keenly alive to the dance of death and used to enjoy it. The dance of death exhibits an experience of which almost all are fearful, but which one filled with the realization of Atman can alone enjoy. For in it there is sublimity just as in creation there is beauty. Sublime it is, because it manifests the immeasurable bounds of the Divine, Its terrific power, Its inscrutableness and incalculability. Ordinary men forget this aspect of God-head. But he, who really welcomes this aspect of the divine nature, becomes a real hero, for he goes beyond all dread of death and destruction, and sees in it the Mother's call to withdraw the whole within Herself. The child of the Mother welcomes it; but the child of flesh is horrified at it.

Vivekananda saw in the Divine Mother the divine energy and thrill, and he felt that divine love is a phase of the divine expression inferior to the divine

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* The Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II, p. 724.

will. Will creates, will destroys, love preserves. Love comes to play its part after the creative will, and when will again re-asserts itself to show its aspect of negation, it transcends and overcomes love. To be human is necessarily to see the loving God, but to be superhuman requires the touch of the terrific will which can create or destroy without the least discomposure of being. Vivekananda felt this very strongly and said that he alone becomes immortal, who can "really with a smile welcome death, suffering and hardships."

Vivekananda saw an inner affinity of his being with Krisna. He had the finest admiration for Buddha, for his wisdom and love; but Buddha was lacking in force and power. Vivekananda saw in Krisna the embodiment of the supramental wisdom, love and power. True to the realistic instinct of a Hindu, he could feel that power should not be denied us, for the organization of life's forces is impossible without it; and, in the regulation of cosmic affairs, will and power are the finest assets. Buddha, in negating the conception of power and installing life in love, forgot that love is a delicate plant that cannot flourish on the soil of earth without the constant protection of power. The *finer* side of

our nature can only exhibit itself and make proper manifestation only when there is the will and the power behind to protect it. The finest organization of humanity may be inspired by love, but love is helpless unless it is backed by will. Love may not always stir us to action, for it is very delicate, and unless the conditions are favourable, it cannot grow.

Power is the needed element which can give practical shape to the forces of love. "Even forgiveness if weak and passive is not good : to fight is better. *Forgive* when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory. . . . The world is a battle-field, fight your way out."* Vivekananda's realistic instinct could not forget that where Tamas (inertness) dominated, life could hardly make an appeal, for Tamas was the shadow of death. Power becomes there a necessity to awaken the finer feelings and to impose better adjustments. In the economy of divine nature, power has its proper place. The Divinity is not all love. It is also stern will and dominating power. The forces help each other in the complexity of life and its adjustments.

In Krisna the Swami found terrific will which threatened empires based on unrighteousness. Krisna

* The Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II, p. 720.

inculcates the gospel of life based on power, mellowed and re-inforced by knowledge and wisdom. In Pārthasārathi the Swami found the ideal and the fulfilment of India in the making. Krisna, a Kshatriya, was brought up among cowherds and milk-maids; he had his best love for them. The divine child, in his free movements not sanctioned by customs and authorities, used to captivate all hearts by the sweet melodies of his flute—a lover and a player with the hearts of men and women! The young damsels were charmed by the melodies of his flute, the old mother by his boyish pranks, his companions by the flashing of his eyes. The veterans in culture and wisdom were silenced by the depth of his wisdom and the range of his vision, the adepts in diplomacy and politics by his foresight, adaptability and divine powers. Such was the character that won Vivekananda's heart and demanded complete obedience from him.

In Krisna he could find the blessed union of the *finest* forces of Brahminism with the wide catholicity of Buddhism, the *finer* adjustment of the realistic forces of life with life's ever free and spontaneous movement. Life and society have two sides: structural and dynamical. The structural side has its value inasmuch as it is a great *conserving force* of the

creative ideals of the race; but unless life can draw freely from its dynamism, it cannot remain elastic. This elasticity could make social life absorb finer values and ideals in its catholic outlook.

Vivekananda saw that Krisna was a personality that could attract the greatest homage from the votaries of culture and at the same time embrace the fallen and the down-trodden. Humanity to Krisna was the shadow of divinity, and he could with his divine vision embrace at once the repositories of culture as well as the naked children of Nature. Krisna was the lover of life; the untutored life has its beauty, just as the tutored life has its dignity; and both must have a place in life, because both serve a purpose. Krisna could see this, and, therefore, did not shrink from recognizing their values in the organization of life. Vivekananda derived this inspiration from the life of Krisna and did his best to carry love and light to the down-trodden and the neglected.

Coming to his master, Vivekananda found in Ramakrishna the happy combination of intellect and heart. He saw God in every human being and his heart would weep for the poor, the weak, the down-trodden—for everyone in this world. At the same time his brilliant intellect could conceive

of such noble thoughts as could harmonize all conflicting sects of the world and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart, into existence. Vivekananda was inspired by this universal spirit in religion and this sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. He spent the last drop of his blood for the weak and the trodden, and emphasized service to them. To serve them was to serve Nārāyana. He felt for the teeming masses of India, and this idea is materialized to-day in the hundreds of humanitarian and educational works established all over India. His church does not observe caste-rigidities; but, at the same time it does not invite social convulsion by liberal social propaganda. Vivekananda's policy was to bring in social reformation more by the propagation of liberal and humanistic culture rather than by positive frontal attacks. He was anxious to impart the touch of love and life to everybody, but he was equally anxious to see the spirit of self-reformation coming from within. True reformation was reformation by self-education. He concentrated his forces thereon. His church, however, invites people of all castes. The fitness is of character, and not of birth.

Vivekananda organized a church on the lofty principles of the Vedānta which he found embodied in

the life and teachings of his master. His conception of a monastery was that it must be a centre of education in religion and philosophy, practical and speculative, so that ultimately it could send forth into the world an army of soldiers of peace, refinement, knowledge and love. His monastery is an order of service, an order of culture and an order of realization. In this all-embracing aspect it has an affinity with the Buddhistic and the Christian monasteries. The monasteries of Samkara have consecrated themselves to Vedāntic scholasticism ignoring the humanistic inspiration. The monasteries of Caitanya are centres of culture in love and devotion. Vivekananda has made his monastery a centre of knowledge and service. Knowledge inspires service. Vivekananda felt the evil effect of an over-long enforced or self-imposed isolation, for the real test of true culture is not possible in complete social isolation. Isolation may have a value in the beginning, but a too prolonged isolation has the baneful effect of a spiritual slumber. A spiritual fellowship is much better than a spiritual isolation. Life cannot grow in isolation, it is true of life in all its concerns. His church, therefore, retains all the phases and all the expressions of life, because the master felt that with

fullness of life is comprehended fineness of vision and realization.

Ramakrishna's ideal was spiritual synthesis, and so the church of Vivekananda extends its embrace to all men of all forms of religious denomination. Nay, it accepts the potentiality of all forms of spiritual approach and religious worship. Hence even to-day an elasticity can be found amongst the members of the Ramakrishṇa Mission. The best form of Tāntricism, the finest form of Vaishnavism together with beneficent humanism prevail within the church. Ramakrishna is worshipped as the symbol of spiritual synthesis and the disciples are inspired by the ideal. They accept Buddha, Christ, Samkara and Ramanuja with all the gods and goddesses, and harmonize them after the universal and catholic spirit of the Vedānta.

The uniqueness of Vivekananda's church is that it has accepted the worship of the Divine Mother in Sarada Moni, Ramakrishna's wife. She is the mother of the fold. The old monasteries of Samkara accepted the worship of gods and goddesses. Vivekananda introduced the divinity of Ramakrishna and Sarada Moni, and instituted them as the inspiring, invisible, divine forces symbolized in human forms. The hundreds of the sons of Ramakrishna walk to-day with

the spirit of catholicity anxious to serve humanity as the Divine. The divinity of man is their outlook—they teach it, they practise it, they live and die for it. They carry practical Vedāntism as reflected in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to all corners of the earth.

Ramakrishna was the spirit of wisdom in ineffable love and Vivekananda was the spirit of action in sovereign calm!

XII

SYNTHETIC LIGHT OF AUROBINDO

Aurobindo is a unique personality. As a poet and thinker and vigorous writer he has captivated the imagination of India and abroad. His contribution to the imageries of life in his poems and constructive thinking in his essays will make him immortal. In his retirement he is often looked upon as a recluse, but the thought-currents that he is radiating through his facile pen, and through direct inspiration, are proofs that he is still vigorously living and holding up helpful light for humanity.

Aurobindo feels that philosophy, as ordinarily understood, must fall short of the true interpretation of life, for generally the philosopher busies himself more with the system of thinking, quite forgetting that life cannot be set in a definite category. The best way of approach is to leave aside the method of building up a construction, and to live the life and to accept the philosophy that life teaches. Aurobindo finds that the contradictions of philosophy can be set aside and are easily reconciled when we approach philosophy

through life. Aurobindo is the prophet of life. He does not see life through compartments and does not suffer from the limitations of scientific thinking, because his interest is mainly life and not a theoretical system based on thinking about life. He never indulges in the schematism of thought, for he feels that life is more than speculation and that the structure of philosophy, however well planned and well built, fails short when it is dissociated from life. Aurobindo's philosophy cannot in that sense be called academical, though it is possible to develop a structure of thought out of it, for thought is the reflection of life. Life, while growing and evolving, also reveals a plan and a structure; and thought in its highest sense is the revelation of that plan and structure. Philosophy in this sense is progressive, inasmuch as the finer manifestation of life brings out finer phases of thought which might have escaped the pure logician who constructs categories without a reference to life.

Philosophy, according to Aurobindo, is more a revelation than a systematization, for it is essentially the plan of life which is revealed by life. The scaffolding of thought always fails to embrace the whole of life. Life reveals itself through different planes, some of which are beyond the access of thought.

The aspect of existence which is not revealed to mind cannot be formulated by thought, for thought cannot go beyond experience. Its matter is supplied by it. Only a shadow of experience is taken into consideration in constructing systems of thought. Sense-experience has been the foundation on which systems of philosophy have been based, excluding the deeper layers enfolded in the soul.

The deeper experiences are generally ignored and philosophy is confined to the rationalization of sense-experience. Its business has been to spin a theory of experience. The limitation of such intellectualism has been keenly felt by Bergson and James. They are anxious to free their philosophy from the vicious limitation of intellectualism, and approach it from the standpoint of life. James is led by his psychological instinct to study the mystic experiences of the soul and formulate a conclusion based upon the nature of these experiences. His deep study of the mystical experiences has enabled him to build up a system of faith upon the foundation of direct experience.

The inclusion of mystical experience is a distinct and bold adventure and a new departure in the realm of philosophy. Bergson tires of intellectual analysis and synthesis and approaches philosophy from the

viewpoint of life; and idealism and realism have ceased any longer to have serious interest in the world of thought. Thought and life are diametrically opposed in Bergson. Thought can see the surface and touch the fringe. It is an imperfect instrument and cannot envisage the whole of life. It can conceive a statical universe, but the free fluidity of life it cannot comprehend. Thought fails to grasp life and motion. Bergson advances his famous theory of intuition, which demands a novel adjustment of the psychic apparatus to apprehend the moving picture of life. Bergson's departure is a new one. Philosophy as thought-construction lands us in the realm of contradictions of mind and matter, reason and instinct, in which we are hopelessly lost. Philosophy raises impossible barriers by its method of approach. A new orientation is necessary. And this is possible when philosophy is no longer confined to systematization of experience, but embraces life and its intuition.

Life is a stress and a stir, it is constantly creative. Matter is inertia and death. Life has to make its way through matter, by moulding it, shaping it, and controlling it. Stir is its essence. Take away stir and energizing, life is nothing. Life mounts from the vital to the mental level, from the mental to the moral

and spiritual level, but its criterion is not changed. It remains what it is—the creative force.

Aurobindo has an approach similar to Bergson's. He develops his philosophy from life. His philosophy is, therefore, not a finished product of thinking, but an expression of living in tune with the finest urge of life.

The nature of this urge remains, in Bergson, somewhat undefined. He calls it *élan vital*, the vital fluid. This vital fluid is the cosmic force. Bergson also speaks of Mind-energy; and Mind-energy has been defined by him as activity seeking expression. The essence of consciousness is held to be memory, for memory in man represents the dynamic aspect of life. Memory is continuous with life; it is not only the power of retention, it also represents the force of progress. It accumulates the past in itself and rolls on towards the future. Life is also that.

The memory inherent in instinctive life is more clearly indicative of its true nature than conscious memory. Conscious memory does not fully represent the constant direction to the future. It has rather a reference to the past. Unconscious or instinctive memory represents the power of conservation as well as the power of creation. This kind of memory is

the essence of life. Creativeness is the criterion of life. It has no definite beginning. It will have no definite end. The expressions of life may be finer and more graceful, as in morality, in art; but to think that creativeness ceases with the emergence of the finer expressions is to miss the essence of Bergsonian philosophy. Life is eternally creative. Art and Religion may be the forms of its creative urge; and the creative possibilities are not exhausted. These possibilities are indeed finer, for they are expressions of life in its grace. We should not restrict our interest to the expressions of life, however fine, but we should keep up the undying interest in life itself.

Life has its "joy" in the attainment of a particular destiny in its effort of creativeness. But this joy is not the highest, since it is the joy of a victory, the joy of a conquest—but not the joy of appreciating life as a whole. Bergson appears to have identified life with creative assertion. Intuition displaces the intellectual construction of a statical world by a panorama of life. But it cannot vouchsafe the complete vision of life, for that would destroy the dynamic character of life and reduce it to a finished product.

Aurobindo believes in the dynamic principle.

It is cosmic. The whole universe is its play. Bergson conceives life to be a continuous stress; Aurobindo, a constant urge of the dynamic Divine. Aurobindo does not draw his inspiration from the unconscious promptings or the subconscious ideation in man. He draws his philosophical inspiration from the height of supramental consciousness. The modern evolutionist traces the growth of life from the non-living; even when he starts with life, he begins with the jostlings of life in its crudest form in the lowest strata of existence. Life emerges in fineness and complexity as it grows. Mind, society and even deity evolve out of the urges whilst they roll on, exhibiting more and more complexities.

Aurobindo is no believer in the evolution of the higher form of life from the lower. Life is the expression of the dynamic Divine. The dynamic Divine represents the cosmic will. The cosmic will is not an expression of a Personal God conceived after the analogy of a human architect. The cosmic will does not fall into any category of personal or impersonal existence. To characterize it as such is to describe it in the language of intellectualism. The cosmic will can have no characterization. It may appear personal or impersonal, but this description is

the effort of mind to comprehend it in ordinary terms. The supreme force which lies at the root of the creation may have personal or impersonal expressions. But essentially it is neither, because it is beyond the order of relativities and contraries; it cannot be brought under any description in logical terms.

Such a force is called Sakti by Aurobindo. Its nature cannot be exactly described; but there is no doubt that it is conscious. Aurobindo is definite on this point. The characterization of the cosmic energy in science is not still definite, the nature of energy still eludes the grasp of the scientists. Most of them characterize the spiritual force as expression in a finer form of the primitive energy. Spiritual force emerges out of the same primitive energy as it grows in complexity and integration.

Aurobindo holds that there is only one force in the universe, the divine Sakti. The other forces are the play of the same force in its restricted expression, either inner or outer. The original force in its process of expression takes many forms. Without this assumption of a seeming duality, the divine Sakti cannot have its play. It bifurcates, as it were, into a plastic substance, matter, and a shaping or moulding power, Sakti. This Sakti appears in various forms

according to the capacity of successfully counteracting the resistance offered by matter. Energy and matter are the bipolar expression of the divine Sakti. Energy is constantly shaping matter; it expresses a finer form when it is more graceful and integrative. This accounts for the different kinds of energies set in a hierarchy : physical, vital and mental. In the physical world, inertia, the tamas aspect of energy is more active, in the vital and the mental, the rajasic aspect is more active. But in the supramental realm the luminosity of sattva is more active. Sakti has supramental expressions. The supramental is active in evolving the deific forms and is necessary for deific expressions. These are the expressions of Sakti in divine personalities. They are as real as anything of physical or mental existence. In a sense they are more real, because they represent supramental forces and tendencies and are more subtly active. They are also objectifications of the divine Sakti. The supramental is an aspect of the divine Sakti, it has finer expressions and is active in the supra-sensuous planes of existence.

Aurobindo is nearer to Schopenhauer than to Bergson in laying emphasis upon Sakti. It is in nothing different from Schopenhauer's will. Will in Schopenhauer is the primal reality which objectifies itself in

the form of ideas. The Platonic ideas are objectifications of will; and in this Schopenhauer is nearer to the Tantra and the Vedanta than Plato. The realms of ideas are the finest spiritual values and creative forces. Though Plato leads us into a world of harmony, his insight does not go far. He does not feel that creative types can be, at bottom, the expressions of will. They are the forms which are manifested when the will takes different lines of expression.

Schopenhauer's shortcoming lies in making will the ultimate reality, exposing himself to the charge of introducing irrationalism into philosophy. It seems that Schopenhauer is better inspired, but the form of his philosophy is defective.

He could see that will lies beyond ideas and necessarily is superior to logical reason. It cannot, therefore, have a personal locus. Schopenhauer has the philosophic genius to see that will is more impersonal than personal, and hence the idea of Reason or Personality could not appeal to him. But he has not the insight to see the impersonal and transcendent aspect of Reason or Consciousness; hence will gets the place of the ultimate reality in his philosophy.

The Tantra allows Sakti a very significant position. It makes it the supreme principle of expression.

But Sakti in Tantra has a locus in Siva. It energizes from that centre, it recoils into it. The Tantra associates becoming with being. And the process of becoming is not confined to the evolution of the physical, vital or mental existence. Spirituality is also the expression of this becoming. The supreme energy has still finer forms of expression in moral and spiritual life. It has still finer forms of impersonal expressions which transcend all categorical determination, and attribution of value to it is not possible. The world of values presupposes personalities, either human or divine; but the impersonal expression of Sakti cannot strictly possess any value. The idea is not formed there. Naturally, at so dizzy a height, the play of Sakti is certainly different from its play either in nature or in human society. The Tantras go beyond Schopenhauer in conceiving Sakti as located in the Supreme Silence which is Siva. Siva is not the personal god Rudra, nor is it the supreme Godhead. There can be no Godhead in the ordinary theistic sense in the Tantras. Such a God is the creation of the spiritual sense, but in the higher illumination of the Transcendent Siva such a notion of God dissolves.

Aurobindo takes his inspiration from the Tantras

and finds almost an identity between Siva and Sakti, intuition and will. The Divine appears to him to have a dynamic aspect. But to call the ultimate reality dynamism is not to state the whole Truth. Behind the dynamic aspect, the Divine is the conscious existence—the supreme calm which is also supreme intuition. "Shiva and Kali, Brahman and Sakti are one and not two who are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but when it is at rest it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered." —(Life Divine, Chapter X, Conscious Force).

Intuition and will are integrally associated. But to characterize this association in logical terms or to picture it in the mental forms is impossible. Will moves in the sphere of luminous silence, in the atmosphere of supreme Awareness. It is difficult to form any complete picture of its movement and working in the supramental sphere. But this much can be said, that its delight lies in moving in the ether of Awareness.

Will is a supreme fact in Aurobindo. But the association of will with intuition does not make it personal, for personality emerges when there is the concentration of will into a centre. This implies objecti-

fication of will into ideas, and ideas into reason and desire. Will at this height remains quite impersonal or it is beyond any conception of personality or impersonality. It is the stress. It is the urge. But to conceive it as stress is also to limit it, for will enjoys at times an equilibrium, an undisturbed quietude and a perfect poise. It is then no longer perceived as will or Sakti. The Siva aspect of existence becomes then prominent. It comes then to the fore. But this cannot be long. Sakti takes joy in alternate rest and activity. Though it is never dissociated from Siva, it takes at times delight to be absorbed in it. It forgets then its cosmic play. It withdraws the play into herself and herself into Siva.

Aurobindo thinks likewise. But he emphasizes the indissoluble unity of Siva and Sakti and seems to be more attracted to the cosmic play of the Sakti. He does not commit himself to the extremes of Sakti completely withdrawn into Siva, or Siva completely losing itself in the Sakti. He emphasizes the integral unity of the two. Though there are states in which Sakti as an individual entity cannot be fully traced out and seems to be enjoying the quietude of Siva, still such a state is not, according to him, the full Truth. It is

only a phase in the play of Sakti. Sakti has also stress and equilibrium, inertia and movement.

The integral association of Siva-Sakti is to Aurobindo a greater and higher truth, and hence if he is alive to the dignity of silence, he is equally alive to the dignity of life. The two are indissolubly related : the more we are installed in silence, the better we live; the more we feel the inpouring, the better we see the face of silence. This attitude makes his position somewhat different from that of the Tantras, which lay more emphasis upon the Siva aspect of existence and characterize the ultimate Truth as beyond the conception of Siva-Sakti (*vide* Kulārnava Tantra). This position is not found in Aurobindo. He conceives the possibility of such a psychic state in realization, but to him it is a lower stage, for it does not exhibit or present the truth of integral existence. This integral conception makes it possible for him to unite all the phases of existence, and all kinds of knowledge.

Reality is then not only Divine Puissance, but is also Divine history. It evolves the whole world out of itself and in the course of history it reveals its Lila through all the phases of life. The world is the history of its self-expression, not only through nature and man,

but also through the supramental and supra-mundane expression of life.

In introducing the conception of integral Lila into the ultimate reality, his position becomes different from the extreme transcendentalism of Samkara on the one side, and from the theistic position of Rāmānuja and Caitanya on the other. In Samkara's philosophy Lila or the divine play has a place, but not in the sense which it has in Aurobindo. The conception of Lila in Samkara is a concession to the theological attitude. It is indeed a play of the divine force, but the force is not installed by him in the category of Reality. The movements of forces indicate only how things behave, but they do not tell us what they are. For Sakti and her operation indicate modes of behaviour, but not of reality.

To Aurobindo Lila is the very soul of reality. It might have occasional respite in the cosmic equilibrium, but that promises the finer and the newer manifestation of it. Lila is expression of the dynamic fullness in integrity. Hence the minutest events have a setting in the cosmic life, and in Aurobindo the meaninglessness of life and its illusions are replaced by its richness and actuality. Nothing in life is meaningless. Nothing in it is purposeless, since every move-

ment in life is the expression of divine Ananda; their so-called uneventfulness originates from their isolation from the whole setting and our inability to read the divine play in life.

Aurobindo draws a distinction between the Transcendent Divine and the Cosmic Divine. "The Cosmic Divine is what is concerned with the actual working out of things under the present circumstances. It is the Will of that Cosmic Divine which is manifested in each circumstance, each movement of this world . . . the Cosmic Will is working towards the eventual realization of the Will of the Transcendent Divine."—(The Riddle of this World, p. 73). Anyhow, one must rise above the play and the transfiguration of the cosmic will and put himself in direct touch and connection with the transcendent will, for it is the supreme force that stands at the basis of life. The transcendent will rises above all transfigurations, and an acquaitance with it is necessary to realize the movement of will beyond the cosmic transfigurations and beyond human and divine history.

The Cosmic Divine and Will always seek guidance from the Transcendent Will, for in it is truly revealed the free character of will as the primal existence. Hence there is a necessity in man to

acquaint himself with the cosmic will and finally with the transcendent will, if he is to feel, understand and identify himself with the main-spring of life and existence. When the channel of connection is established between the individual and the transcendent will, there the movement in man becomes truly free from any necessity and purpose. Then alone can he understand that behind the cosmic will lies the transcendent will which is especially a movement in pure delight. The Cosmic Will has cosmic purpose, but the transcendent is really spontaneous movement in delight. This really reveals the nature of the ultimate reality, which is consciousness and movement,—a movement in self-luminous delight.

The divine play is a play in bliss. Its whole movement is in Ananda, for Ananda is its nature and essence. Though the movement of will is strictly spontaneous—this being its nature—yet this spontaneous movement is also a movement of delight. For, like intuition and activity, delight is also the heart of reality.

Every beat of life, each throbbing of will, is a wave of delight. There is no movement of life which does not reveal this truth. This truth is not revealed to us, because we cannot rise high enough to understand

life itself. We are accustomed to identify the satisfaction of our impulses with happiness; and vital being has its natural gravitation to them. It becomes difficult to rise from this tendency of being to understand the true nature of life as delight.

It is a common fallacy to suppose that spiritual life fills us with the delight of sensibility. Sensibility plays an important part in the complex texture of our nature, and it often forms the pivot of our being, but the delight of sensibility cannot satisfy our whole being, which is the demand of spiritual life. Even where this crude theory is given up in favour of a finer theory of the perfection of being, delight is supposed to be the first element and expression of perfection. Perfection is to be realized, and the more it is realized, the more becomes our being responsive to the higher stretches of light and delight. But delight is not to be achieved by gradual process. It is one with life; the more the fineness of life is realized, the greater the delight is realized. This conception of life as delight has a great effect upon the entire outlook.

Life is conceived in delight, sustained in delight. Even its changes are forms of delight. The total identification of delight with life takes away the sting from life; and, therefore, we can invite the dark side

of life with as much equanimity as the bright side, for in reality this partial valuation is a false reading of life.

Life is all bright. And movement of life in every form is delight; but this understanding is often shadowed by ignorance. Ignorance darkens our vision and prevents us from seeing the whole movement of life, its nature and delight, and raises obstacles or barriers where everything should be smooth and easy.

The understanding of life as Ananda makes the cosmic life essentially rhythmical. Will and life move in unison and harmony. The sense of conflict and discord follows from the covered notion or view of life. And where only our creations and creative values are sought to be imposed upon the cosmic movement of life, naturally a conflict arises; for our intelligence, unless it can rise to the height of understanding the supramental movement of life, always takes a limited perspective of it, and therefore is excluded from the vision of the whole setting. Philosophers suffer from one-sidedness and partiality, because they are ready with their intellectual schemes and do not sound the depths and draw inspiration from life itself.

Ananda has two forms: the Ananda of completeness and the Ananda of creativeness. To Aurobindo the former is the joy of harmony, for in

the infinite life which is ever complete and ever accomplished (although dynamical), the sense of harmony never is lost; even if there are changes—and there are incessant changes in infinite life—they take place according to the law of harmony. In the fullness of life the changes are presented as aspects of the infinite life. Aurobindo is against reading life by compartmental division, and this he emphasizes in his Purna Yoga. The divine Ananda can well embrace the supernal delight in completeness as well as in creativeness. The creativeness keeps up its dynamical fullness, completeness keeps up its integrity. Creativeness is not inconsistent with completeness.

Completeness and creativeness introduce the synthetic view of life. The divine life is ever creative, and ever complete. The tendency to dissociate life from creativeness and to seek its complete cessation in completeness and sterile silence is to Aurobindo the misreading of life. Nirvanic calm has its appeal because the creative delight in life is ignored, and the creative harmony is misread. Death is not the last word of existence, nor suffering the only fact of life. Death is a temporary inertia, suffering a temporary privation. They are necessary to understand life in its completeness, to exhibit its dignity and beauty. In

fact, when the thread of life is truly taken hold of, the string of these contraries melts away, and the darkest phases of life receive its saving grace. They have their Ananda or delight. Our usual estimate falls short, our estimate is not correct, for life's inertia is mistaken for life's fullness. Death, suffering and misery shake off our inertia and invite greater and more abounding life. Hence they have a place in life as really serving life's purpose.

The peace of Nirvana has its attraction because it offers a relief from the pulsating heart, but the real remedy cannot be found there, for life again reasserts itself and draws us into the vortex of its currents.

Life has its profound silence in its constant pulsation. In its poise it has its profound silence; even in its grief it has its joy. The secret of life is to be found not in forsaking it, but in fully living it. Life reveals its true nature only in living.

Aurobindo synthetizes the calm with the dance of life. Life is full. There is no privation in it. The more we understand life, the more we see that death, privation and suffering are illusions. Our misery arises from the error of wrongly identifying life with the phases of life. The cure lies not in forsaking of life, but in becoming more and more identified with it.

Privation and suffering are possible because we are not identified with life. We are cut off from the source. Life is peace, power and plenty. Death and suffering are errors or illusions, not realities. They are effects of preconceived notions which originate possibly because we neglect life.

Though Aurobindo is opposed to the division of life and silence, he is quite alive to the divine Ananda of repose and the Ananda of creative expression. But in him the two are mingled so intimately that division is not conceivable. There is poise in creativeness. The greater the poise, the finer the creation. There is creativeness in poise, for the divine life is never completely static, but always dynamic. Aurobindo is alive to life transcending quietism as well as activism. It is active where it is quiet. It is quiet where it is active.

Curiously enough, Schopenhauer, who asserts will to be the ultimate principle, welcomes the state of will-lessness as the highest bliss. Schopenhauer feels that the denial of will is accessory to calm, and Schopenhauer has the semblance of consistency in asserting that will to deny is also a phase of will. Schopenhauer has the finer inspiration, but his philosophy is weak, for he could hardly see that the denial

of will brings to a close the very spring of life and existence. Aurobindo never favours the prospect of will-less bliss as the goal of life. Movement, life and bliss are his attractions.

Aurobindo has no liking for a negative attitude in life; hence, though he sees the dignity of the Nirvanic calm, he leaves it aside as not yielding the full fruition of life. Aurobindo is always alive to the intrepid and incessant activity of life, in which he sees a higher ideal than in the Nirvanic calm. Will is the divine urge and life is divine; and in no state is the completeness of life possible to realize without the full play of will. "The peace of silence is welcome, for in it the self can rise to the impersonal height and can do the work of 'eternal Verities—Love, Truth and Righteousness.' It is possible to pass into a silence beyond the silence. But this is not the whole of our ultimate experience, nor the single and all-excluding truth. For we find that this Nirvana, this self-extinction, while it gives an absolute peace and freedom to the soul within is yet consistent in practice with a desireless but effective action without."—(Life Divine, Chapter IV, Reality Omnipresent).

Though Aurobindo is keen on the energizing of will, yet he is opposed to the life of desires. Desires

are tendencies of the self, mostly egoistic, which bind the self to earth. They are in association with lower emotions. Such a life has no charm for Aurobindo. We cannot conceive in the plane of emotions and desires the movement and inspiration of cosmic and transcendent will. Probably the dominance of such desires tired out the patience and perseverance of Schopenhauer and he was, therefore, anxious to abolish the life of will altogether. But the finer insight of Aurobindo has been able to distinguish will from desires, and to discern the cosmic and the transcendent movement of will as distinguished from egoistic tendencies. The cosmic movement, as pointed out above, is a movement in delight, and hence there is no need to turn away from the life of will and to welcome the negation of life in the impenetrable abyss of the calm.

Aurobindo's conception of life as the expression of divine Ananda has similarity with the basic conception of Vaishnavism. It maintains that life is Lila in bliss. The bliss aspect of the Divine has been very much accentuated in Vaisnavism. The philosophy of Vaisnavism, especially in the Bengal School, can be fitly called Æstheticism and Divine Romanticism. God is love. Love is bliss. The soul is to rise above

all movements of life to feel and enjoy the expression of the rhythmic dance of bliss. In Vaisnavism the divine life as knowledge and power has been overshadowed by the conception of divine life as joy and delight; the heart of Vaisnavism has been centred upon a synthetic conception of divine knowledge, power and love. But the life of divine love is conceived as containing the finest bliss. Vaisnavism has become more or less the religion of heart. This has been especially the case with Bengal Vaisnavism, where extreme emphasis upon anthropomorphic conception seeking satisfaction in "Divine child" and "Divine bridegroom" introduces us into the realm of delight, but it surely removes the conception of divinity as the centre of power and wisdom. It awakens a kind of divine amorous feeling. It fails to evaluate spiritually all the phases of life.

Aurobindo, while fully conscious of the softer side of our spiritual nature, is equally alive to the play of the divine life in creation and destruction. "God is there, not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the winds." The whole play of life is divine; and hence Aurobindo feels no shrinking from any phase or aspect of life. There may be hierarchies of expression of the supra-

mental power, but nothing can stand out of touch with this power. Aurobindo does not seem to favour the division of Sakti as material and spiritual. Hence the whole movement of life must be the integral expression of spiritual power.

The spiritual is the real. Life is spiritual. The material is at bottom spiritual. Because we are accustomed to think in terms of our intellect, we are committed to this kind of dualism. Bergson has truly said that intellect represents in a statical form what is really living and dynamical; and if, instead of taking our guidance from intellect, we take our inspiration from life, the cast of existence would appear fundamentally different, and the forms of intellect and their limitation would disappear. The flow of spirit, which is connected with the minutest nerve-cells, cannot infuse its freshness and vigour, because the continuous inflow and stream is cut by the sense of positive thought of a duality. This possibility of vivification of nature by spirit, therefore, completely dispenses with the dualistic hypothesis, for nature is nothing but the reflection of spirit in its own self.

To Aurobindo matter is not different from spirit. Hence all the movements of life, physical, vital, mental, intellectual, aesthetic, or moral are all alike

spiritual. Vaisnavism in drawing a distinction between nature and spirit is committed like the Sankhya to a dualism which, however, it sets aside by characterizing nature as the 'outer' force of the Divine.

To Vaisnavism the eccentric urges of life are, therefore, natural and have no place in the spiritual setting of life. To Aurobindo life's movement, inner or outer, is in essence spiritual; the only difference is that in the outer form the expression must be different from the expression in the inner form.

To this end it requires an instrument; this instrument is matter. But what is this matter? It is nothing but the inertia of life; if we can set aside this inertia, materiality will disappear and life will appear essentially a dynamism. The physical and the vital are the same force as the spiritual, but the spiritual commands.

This obliteration of the distinction between matter and spirit introduces a new meaning into spiritual life and spiritual values. It makes every moment of life spiritual. The common and usual way of thinking takes away the zest of life and makes us seek the spirit in the silence of the heavens, neglecting its sacred touch in every breath of our life.

Transfiguration of the physical, the vital and the

mental under the influence of spirit and their movement and functioning in divine harmony are the great promise of Aurobindo's vision. The spiritualization of matter is a great advance in Aurobindo. Plato seeks the supreme satisfaction and felicity in the realm of super-sensible ideas, for the sensible could not be installed in the super-sensible. The impress of matter upon the soul is tormenting to the soul, which is anxious to put off the chain and the bondage. The Vedanta and the Sankhya equally condemn the movement of ignorance and seek rest in Transcendence. Though in the Vedanta an attempt is made to make the life's movement conceived in spirit, still the Vedanta by allowing a distinction between the relative and the Absolute and finally by totally denying any possible synthesis between the relative and the Absolute emphasizes the uniqueness of the Absolute and its realization, and does not harmonize dynamic spirituality with Transcendant quietism. Even the Tantras impress Sivahood as the final consummation of life. The super-sensible is set against the sensible, and a division is conceived to exist between the two. In the synthetic philosophy of Aurobindo the integral reality cannot allow any division in it; hence freedom from life is never considered as the desirable end or con-

summation. Matter is eternally plastic, and with the touch of spirit it dissolves its stiffness and exhibits its pliability that it can be a safe instrument for spiritual expression. In fact, "matter" is an illusion of the intellect. From the standpoint of life there is no matter, but only the play of spirit through the different grades of expressions. The physical and the vital discard their grossness under the pressure of spirit. And the ethics raised on the distinction of matter and spirit is set aside. The division of the physical and the psychical disappears in the spiritual. They become the forms of spiritual expression. Matter, which is supposed to constitute a restriction and offer an opposition to spirit, becomes a help-mate to it. Matter was the bar, matter becomes the helper.

This possibility of spiritualizing matter makes the connection between heaven and earth direct. The kingdom of God or spirit is not to be sought beyond, but here. The true spiritual effort lies then not only in the striving after transcendent existence, but in making the sensible the channel of expression of the super-sensible. The whole movement of life is directly related to the transcendent energy ; for, by being thus related, the movement grows in perfection. The supposed barrier between matter and spirit has always

caused a divorce between the earthly and the spiritual life, hiding from vision the real and true nature of life, which is the play between matter and spirit. In theology the transfiguration of the instincts and impulses is maintained, but still this transfiguration reaches the mental or at most the vital level, and the sense of conflict still remains between the spiritual and the gross physical.

The spiritual ideal lies in removing the supposed division of nature and spirit and in spiritualizing every movement of life. Emancipation is not the ideal. The greater ideal is life and spiritualization. We should free ourselves from philosophical shibboleths and very closely follow life to find out life's full possibilities. Emancipation presupposes an eternal conflict between life's possibilities and spirit's transcendence, and makes the former meaningless. The setting of the immanental beauties and sublimities equally loses force with life's stirring and formations. Though Aurobindo denies the conception of emancipation in the usual sense, still he is fully alive to the supreme puissance of life in divine Ananda. He conceives a state in life when every movement will be spiritual and the finest peace of the soul will be established in the greatest movement of life—the free

repose will be enjoyed in the transparent light and intrepid activity.

This ideal of supreme Puissance in finest repose of life amidst the surest activity has in it the fulfilment of life in its integrity. The finest fruition of life is mingled with the supreme transcendence.

Spiritual dynamic fullness is the greatest conception in Aurobindo. In Indian thought dynamism of life has not received due recognition; even in the Tantras the attempt is made to transcend all forms of dynamism, however fine. But Aurobindo's stress on the dynamism of spiritual life and of the transfiguration of every movement of life through the ingress and infusion of the supramental Sakti, is indeed unique. This uniqueness has introduced into his system the ideal of divine transfiguration and spiritualization of the forces in man in place of liberation. Life is to be completely divinized, and humanity should be installed into a divine society.

The complete end of this ideal cannot be foreseen; but this much is certain, that all the beauties and harmonies of divine life should be thrown open to man, and every movement of life will be felt as divine. At least human life will ascend the ladder of highest possible evoluton. And the power-house of life and light will be accessible to it for ever. The idea of

life as a cycle of Ananda, living by Ananda and wheeling from Ananda to Ananda emerges before our view.

So long as we do not realize the full possibilities of the Transcendent Sakti, we are hedged round by contraries of life and death, creation and destruction. We can soon rise above these contraries, if we can establish a connection with the Transcendent Sakti. The direct connection with the spring of life changes immediately our outlook on life and enables us to enjoy its transcendent play. In super-mundane play the divine Sakti no longer expresses itself through contraries natural to the mundane life.

Aurobindo's greatest originality lies in showing how man can be transformed into superman and usher in a divine race of humanity. Nietzche in Germany was the prophet of Superman, and he conceived Superman as the last product of evolution. Just as evolution passes from the animal stage into that of man, similarly its urge makes man emerge into superman. The superman is the man of power, the man of irresistible will. Nietzche's emphasis upon power and dominating will lends a bad odour to his conception. Nietzche was weary of the feminine and soft side of human nature and preferred power to grace. Naturally

his conception of superman is somewhat wrongly interpreted as a covert form of manifold egoism. Nietzche has the faint glimpse of the divine power and majesty, hence his superman is more of a hero than a saint. The Christ-ideal represents the other side of the divine nature as love and grace. This is applauded as the highest ideal, in contrast to the majesty of Power. Power in man is so often associated with the crude impulses of egoism that it becomes very difficult to associate Power with the Divine. In the complete movement of life, Power plays an equal part with Love. Power represents the majestic side of the Divine; Love, its beatific side. The sweeter rhythm and finer expression of life become possible when the divine power is established in us. Love leans on power.

Aurobindo's conception of superman differs from Nietzche's. Here is no conception of emergence. Rather it is waking of the divinity that is in man. It is, in one word, the divine descent in man and the transformation of the human energies and powers into the Divine. The superman is the concrete instrument and centre of the divine play in human society. It is more the building up of man by the transforming power of the divine energy than the fruition of a force

constantly pressing upward. The divine descent makes man a superman. When the divine force takes possession of a subject and energizes its faculties and powers, it exhibits superior intuition, indomitable power, irresistible will, and embracive love. There may be different varieties of superman inasmuch as they exhibit the complete or partial descent of the divine force, or the full or imperfect transfiguration of their being. There are times when the divine force meets obstruction in some part of our being, and cannot completely establish itself. Again, the subject may not be strong enough to receive the full inspiration of the divine nature. Some may exhibit power, others may excel in love, in compassion or in wisdom.

Sometimes, again, the Divine may descend no further than the intuitive mind, leaving the other parts of our nature as they are, inelastic and uninspired. Such supermen do not exhibit the highest possibility and the finest transformation.

Aurobindo supposes that the finest consummation lies in the complete descent of the Divine with its full power, love, majesty and wisdom into man. The descent of the supramental force enlivens the faculties; knowledge becomes intuitive, delight serene, will unflinching. The descent of the supramental energy is

traceable to the calm composure of being, joyous activity and harmonious movement. Majestic and beautiful, wise and compassionate, the superman moves free. He does not shrink. He is not obstructive. But when he moves for a divine purpose, he moves with intensiveness and force that are irresistible. It is difficult to predict the movement of the superman, for the texture of his being is always reinforced by the divine inspiration and power; he sees more extensively, he feels more keenly than ordinary intelligence. His whole being is filled with supernal delight.

The wisdom of superman is not ordinary wisdom. He reads the panorama of life at first hand; life in its deeper layers stands revealed before his cosmic intuition. There is no need for him to acquire information and knowledge by experience. He feels the stress of supramental life direct and sees the changes that are being ushered in cosmic history by this force. He is directly aware of the supramental heights, and the difference between the supramental and the mental is gradually reduced under the pressure and impress from the supramental. Hence all the obscurities of mental life are abolished—and its habitual formations and ways of construction are replaced by immediate insight and direct knowledge. Nay, even memory moves to

keen activity and becomes the depository of supramental idea. It seems, as it were, the meeting ground of the mental and the supramental. The inception of the supramental is retained by memory which becomes the silent moulding force in actual life.

The supramental memory, like the supramental intuition, helps the unconscious and spontaneous moulding of the entire being and accordingly makes the whole being more and more receptive to its inspiration. The supramental force may occasionally inspire us, but unless the memory can retain the impression and can make the mental-vital vehicle more and more responsive to it, the supramental cannot work incessantly. Under the impress of the supramental, memory throws out the usual impressions of the vital and the mental working and retains the supramental impressions contributing to the complete transformation of our nature.

Memory of the supramental is a great transforming power even as the supramental itself. Its impress becomes the silent changing force. Instincts have a transitory nature, and the human system is elastic enough to hold the impression of the supramental. This becomes the great dynamic force which gives battle to the lower-conscious forces, defeat and dispel them, and occupy their place.

It becomes absolutely necessary to go by the mental constructions and the vital and the physical habits, and to open our being completely to the supramental force to make our system completely fit for its functioning. The least self-assertion and egoism, the least positive attitude defeats the desirable transformation.

The infusion of the supramental force reveals the supramental character of the entire setting of life, and the more the play of this force becomes conscious, the more the idea of the superman becomes clear to us. The functioning of the subconscious forces begins to be controlled by the super-conscious forces, and, therefore, consciousness rises to a supreme height and there remains nothing hidden in us. When the transformation of life, mind and will is complete, man is totally changed, and he feels that the movement in all parts of his being is taking place under the direct guidance of the supramental. No inertia remains in any part of his being, though it enjoys the supramental *quiet* along with the supramental *activity*.

Aurobindo thinks that this transforming process under the pressure of the supramental goes up to the vital and the physical level, and energizes even the cell and nerve-centres of the body, removing disease, age

and even death. This is a possibility which can be actualized when the supramental force can work completely through every part of our being. It is indeed a kind of illusion to think of the distinction between body and mind, and humanity has long suffered under this illusion. The supramental energy is the only reality, and if anyhow we can drive out the common way of thinking which creates a bar to the full working of the supramental force, the illusion of the body as a material thing will disappear. Common sense thinking cannot see how the transformation of the vital and the physical body is every day imperceptibly taking place and cannot register the changes. The sensitives can feel them easily. But the complete domination of the spirit over the flesh is not possible unless the usual trend of thinking is completely removed, for the least trace of it proves a positive bar to the full fruition. If with different thought currents, the nervous system is affected, and the tone is changed, then it is no wonder that the supramental energy can spiritualize the flesh and remove the sense of its materiality. It is a matter of psychic, vital and physical opening, responsiveness and transformation.

The Vaisnavas conceive a sort of spirit-body. but they do not consider that the flesh can be spiritualized.

This conception of the spiritual and the material as two distinct orders of existence stands in the way of their accepting the possibility of spiritualizing the flesh. Hence they conceive the divine forms to be purely spiritual.

Aurobindo is not satisfied with a theory. He has the spirit of a true scientist and experimentalist; he thinks that under proper guidance and discipline, it is easy to bring our psychological and physical systems under control and to mould them in a new way by removing the grossness from the nervous system and bringing it into direct connexion with the spring of life and energy. If the current can be kept flowing through the physical and vital systems, a complete change in them will result.

Religious systems leave aside the consideration of the body and go straight to the spirit, but here the tendency is just the opposite: everything is spiritual; so there is no question of passing into it; the only problem is completely to establish it even in the so-called realm of matter. The victory can be assured in this way, but not in completely forsaking the realm of matter.

Aurobindo is anxious to bring down the kingdom of Happiness from heaven and implant

it on earth, for to him there is only one kingdom—Heaven; the earth is a creation of misleading philosophy and misguided thinking. If we can leave aside common-sense prejudice and draw from life, the earth will be the veritable *civitas dei*. The superman is the vehicle of the expression of the Divine Energy, Ananda and Plenitude on earth. If the divine Power can successfully descend and work purification and transformation, the full expression of the divine nature then becomes possible.

The little freedom that man enjoys will be completely sacrificed in utter resignation in order that he can enjoy and feel the impress of the Power that moves the cosmos and controls the cosmic transfiguration. Human freedom is the freedom of agency. Divine freedom is the freedom of expression.

The one is purposive. The other is spontaneous. The purposiveness of human choice and motion cannot allow him to enjoy the delight of the spontaneity of cosmic movement. Man's freedom is in another way determinism, for the thought of a desired result binds him down to a Karmic effect and cuts him off from the universal movement. If man can forgo the egoistic and Karmic formations, if he can feel and realize the stress of the dynamic Divine, he can surely avoid all

determinations and Karmic effects and yet can move freely, easily and effectively. Aurobindo finds that the being of man is always moved by the impress of the dynamic Divine; but self-assertion, born of ignorance, keeps us away from the stream of universal life and energy and chains us to our sense of agency and Karmic responsibility.

The superman has finer and wider freedom, because he is detached to his sense of agency and has allowed the divine Sakti to work itself out through him. By complete removal of self and fullest dedication of the entire being to the divine Sakti, he allows the parts of his being to be vivified, reinforced and moved by the divine energy. Man is no longer the worker. The Sakti works through him. This ingress of Sakti effects a complete change in our being; Sakti displaces the agency of man, who now becomes the onlooker of the divine play. The superman is the man elevated to the plane of a seer and enjoyer of the play which is acted by the divine Sakti. The freedom from all personal motives, together with the transcendence of Sakti and the infusion of the Sakti with the vigorous activities of the vehicles, transforms man into a superman.

Aurobindo in emphasizing the detached position

of Sakti has an approach to the Vedantic Sadhana. The Vedanta admonishes to stand aside from all the urges of life, meditative or active. Contemplation and action, from the Vedantic view-point, are equally urges of life which are to be transcended in Truth. Truth is silence. Meditation and action are movements of mind and impelling of life.

The position of the detached observer is necessary not to quell the currents of life, but to awaken the finer currents of the soul. Detachment from life dispenses with the notion of an active energy which fastens the soul to the wheel of Karma; but the attitude of Sakti together with the spirit of receptivity helps to open the divine nature in man. It keeps open all the paths of activity; at the same time it frees us from the sense of agency and Karmic fruition. No line of self-expression either of meditation or of action is closed to the seeking soul; on the other hand, every such soul gains infinite elasticity under divine inspiration. Man no longer is the meditator or the actor. Meditation or action is the centric or the eccentric urge of the divine Sakti. The superman does not meditate, the superman does not act. The divine Sakti does all things through him. The man stands aside. While the Vedanta fixes the highest consum-

mation at Transcendence and silence, Aurobindo finds the silence of the soul to be most helpful to the infusing of the divine Sakti into man and to the transvaluation of the values in life. The Vedanta does not lay the least emphasis upon the realm of values, since to it the highest fruition in order of values can acquaint us with the finest Sattvic expressions and currents of life, and enchain us to their beauty, harmony and dignity, but closing to us the finest fruit of wisdom, awakening from the illusion not of the sense, but of the life, both human and divine. From the view-point of life, the Vedantists are conscious of pragmatic demands and conceive the transvaluation of values on the basis of identity; still their attitude is more ethereal, inasmuch as they regard Truth as a higher concept than values. The regulation of values on the basis of identity is no doubt a desirable end; but in the highest attitude of consciousness, the sense of values completely disappears, since it is all Peace, and all Silence.

To Aurobindo Peace of the supramental is associated with the fine currents of life, and the values have a place in the divine setting of existence. Transvaluation of values has, here, a deeper meaning, for the creative forces are real. They are expressions of

the divine will. And nothing in life is to be neglected, for every movement of life is divine movement. The spiritualization of the entire life with all its movements is the ideal, for ignorance keeps away this vision and establishes crude realism in place of dignified idealism.

Hence the superman, according to Aurobindo, takes delight in the divine play. He enjoys the play as a seer, he also takes an active part in it. The Jivan-Mukta is always aware that the highest Truth is nowhere expressed in the cosmic play, hence he maintains a somewhat indifferent attitude to it, though he can enact his part in the world. To Aurobindo, the life of silence in spirit can really awaken us to the significance of its active movement and help the understanding of the divine purposes and adaptations. The more we can hold ourselves detached to our personal ends, the more the cosmic movement reveals its divine nature. The superman has then a double attitude: (i) the attitude of percipience; and (ii) the attitude of receptivity and activity. The former gives divine wisdom, the latter divine power. It is this element of power which Aurobindo claims especially for the Superman. In other words, Aurobindo's superman absorbs more and more the Divine nature and aspires after being more and more divine. The complete

identification is not the question, for man has an imperfect instrument; but if man can always feel that the powers that move in him are divine powers, if the divine can completely establish itself in the superman, the wisdom and power in the superman will have luminous expression and movement.

And the cosmic divine forces reveal themselves and inspire the superman's movement and activity. The man no longer moves in him. The Divine moves in him. The Divine thinks, the Divine feels; the man is reborn and recognizes his divine nativity. When this orientation takes place, a new history and a new era of life are born, and the superman becomes directly conscious of the supramental forces that shape and guide the universe. These are forces of the Divine Mother active throughout evolution, creation, growth, and decay of the universe. The supramental consciousness reveals the beauteous, the creative, the majestic and the graceful aspect of the divine Sakti in its transcendent dignity and immanental immensity. The divine Sakti can reveal its transcendental glories as well as its expression through the movements of life, through things and events.

The more this supramental force can be assimilated in our nature, the greater is the possibility of

width of knowledge, height of power and delicacy of movement.

The divine man will wield uncommon power, command wide range of wisdom, and will have more graceful movement. He will have beauty, wisdom and power simultaneously, for these changes are effected in him by the supramental force.

All the aspects of the divine Sakti with their full range and intensity of power reveal themselves through the superman. This ideal consummation leaves nothing human in man. This makes him all-too-divine, in place of all-too-human.

This complete saturation of our being with the Divine does not withdraw us from the earthly life; on the contrary, the transfigured man, from his situation of life, high or humble, can play his allotted part on life's drama. A wrong valuation can set up the code of higher and lower vocation in life. Our inability to trace every movement of life to the divine spring really accounts for the many codes which are set up as temporary conventions with the sanction of reason and common sense. But with the dawn of divine wisdom the ordinary sense of realization will change; life, in its humble or proud vocations, will exhibit its sacredness and beauty, power and love, and

the divine race of man will surely change human conventions and find the divine way to spiritual freedom and harmony. All centres will freely move and at the same time will usher in the cosmic harmony, for freedom and harmony are the indications of divine life.

The finest contribution of Aurobindo is his conception of the race of Superman. He is not satisfied with the divinization of the individual man, though it is essential to usher in a race of Superman, for the Divine must descend in some centre before its force and power can scatter elsewhere. The Divine selects the medium for transmission of the divine powers but no sooner the divine transformation takes place than the individual realizes his affinity into divine being with the many. The individual realizes his relation with the transcendent one as well as with the cosmic many. When the divine Sakti establishes the connection with and opens the path-ways of the discharge of the divine force to the individual, the transformation of the race goes along with the individual transformation, especially of those connected directly with transformed centre. The liberation of the individual has a meaning, not alone for him but for those also, with whom he can perceive the psychic connection and relation. The tendency of force, even of spiritual force, is to diffuse

itself in the surrounding, and generally it flows out through channels where there is the affinity in psychic being. This law of psychic affinity gives the possibility of collective transformation and collective liberation without much effort by absorbing the descending power through an inviting and responsive attitude. The satellites invariably gather light from the central star.

Aurobindo says, "The liberation of the individual soul is therefore the keynote of the definitive divine action; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns.

It is the point of light at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge. But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically. Its unity with the transcendent one is incomplete without its unity with the cosmic Many. And that lateral unity translates itself by a multiplication—a reproduction of its own liberated state at other points in the Multiplicity. The divine soul reproduces itself in similar liberated souls as the animal reproduces itself in similar bodies. Therefore, whenever even a single soul is liberated, there is a tendency to an extension and even to an outburst of the same divine self-consciousness in

other individual souls of our terrestrial humanity and —who knows?—perhaps even beyond the terrestrial consciousness."—(Life Divine, Chapter V, the Destiny of the Individual).

The philosophy of Ȧurobindo utilizes the Divine Sakti to the utmost and establishes a race on earth which will make it full of supramental wisdom and supramental power. This new race—a race free from all conventions of life—will carry with it Peace, Power and Plenty. This is the promise of his philosophy.
